

R E B E C C A ;

OR,

THE FILLE DE CHAMBRE.

A NOVEL.

BY MRS ROWSON.

THIRD AMERICAN EDITION.

BOSTON,

PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

1832.

L.H.S.

Lingham Historical Society



IN MEMORY OF
ALFRED HENRY HERSEY

*Gift of Mary H. Hersey who died
December 18, 1941 in her
ninety-ninth year*

CRC

Edw^d D. Ingraham.
July 3^d 1832.

241540

From the Library of the
Johns Hopkins University

PROPOSALS FOR PRINTING BY SUBSCRIPTION
AN ORIGINAL NOVEL,

IN four volumes, duodecimo, dedicated, by permission, to Mrs. Bingham, entitled, **TRIALS OF THE HUMAN HEART**, By Mrs. Rowson, of the New Theatre, Philadelphia, author of **VICTORIA, INQUISITOR, CHARLOTTE, FILLE DE CHAMERE, &c. &c.**

“ ————— If there's a power above us,

“ (And that there is, all nature cries aloud

“ Thro' all her works), he must delight in virtue;

“ And that which he delights in, must be happy.”

“ The soul, secur'd in her existence, smiles;

“ At the drawn dagger, and defies its point.”

CONDITIONS.

I. The work to be printed with a neat type, on good paper.

II. Price to subscribers, four dollars, bound, one half to be paid at the time of subscribing.

III. The subscribers' names will be prefixed as patrons to the undertaking.

* * Subscriptions are received by the author, the corner of Seventh and Chestnut-streets, Messrs. Carey, Rice, and Dobson, Philadelphia; Mr. Green, Annapolis; Messrs. Allen, Berry, and S. Campbell, New-York; Messrs. West, Thomas and Andrews, Blake, and Larkin, Boston; Mr. Haswell, Vermont; Messrs. Rice, and Edwards, Baltimore; Mr. W. P. Young, Charleston.

✎ Mrs. Rowson begs leave to inform her friends and the public in general, that on account of the heavy expence attending the publication of this work, it cannot be sent to the press till she has obtained 300 subscribers.

April 26. 1794.

411aw.

A NEW NOVEL.
TO THE LADIES OF PHILADELPHIA.
THIS DAY IS PUBLISHED BY
MATTHEW CAREY,

No. 118, MARKET-STREET,

Price, bound, 5-8ths of a dollar, sewed in marble paper,
half a dollar,

CHARLOTTE. A tale of truth. In two vols. By
Mrs. Rowson, of the New Theatre, Philadelphia, au-
thor of *Victoria*, the *Inquisitor*, the *Fille de Chambre*, &c.

Of CHARLOTTE, the Reviewers have given the follow-
ing character:—It may be a Tale of truth, for it is not un-
natural, and it is a tale of real distress. Charlotte, by the ar-
tifice of a teacher, recommended to a school, from humani-
ty rather than a conviction of her integrity, or the regulari-
ty of her former conduct, is enticed from her governess,
and accompanies a young officer to America. The marri-
age ceremony, if not forgotten, is postponed, and Charlotte
dies a martyr to the inconstancy of her lover, and treachery
of his friend. The situations are artless and affecting; the
descriptions natural and pathetic. We should feel for Char-
lotte if such a person ever existed, who for one error scarce-
ly, perhaps, deserved so severe a punishment: If it is a fic-
tion, poetic justice is not, we think, properly distributed.

SAID CAREY HAS JUST PUBLISHED,

A TWO SHEET MAP OF KENTUCKY, com-
piled by, Elihu Barker. Price 1 dol. and 2-3ds.

WAR ATLAS, containing maps of France, Germany,
Spain, Italy, the United Provinces, the Netherlands, and
the West-Indies. Price, 2 dollars.

Map of New-Jersey. Half a dollar.

Maps of Vermont, Connecticut, Delaware, Georgia —
price 3 8ths of a dollar.

May 1. 1794.

codts.

A NEW NOVEL.

THIS DAY IS PUBLISHED, (price 5s.
neatly bound), by H. & P. RICE, Book-
sellers, No. 50, Market-street,

The FILLE DE CHAMBRE,

A novel, by Mrs. Rowson, of the New Theatre,
Philadelphia, author of Charlotte, the Inqui-
sitor, Victoria, &c. &c.

The highest wish I ever formed has been,
Just to be plac'd above the reach of want,
In the blest medium between shining state
And the hard griping hand of penury.
Enough for this, and if I have to spare
A little for my suff'ring fellow-creatures,
I shall have reached the height of my ambition.

H. & P. Rice have just opened, a very capital collection
of Books, imported in the ship Theresa from London.

August 1. 1794.

w3w3a

REBECCA,
OR THE
FILLE DE CHAMBRE,

A NOVEL,
BY MRS ROWSON.

The highest wish I ever form'd has been,
Just to be plac'd above the reach of want,
In the blest medium between shining state,
And the hard griping hand of penury.
Enough for this, and, if I have to spare
A little for my suff'ring fellow creatures,
I shall have reach'd the height of my ambition.

Third American edition.

BOSTON.

PRINTED FOR THE BOOKSELLERS.

1831.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
Duke University Libraries

REBECCA,
OR THE
FILLE DE CHAMBRE.

CHAPTER I.

‘BUT who knows, my dear father,’ cried Rebecca Littleton, laying her hand on that of her father, ‘who knows but something yet may be done to reward a veteran grown gray in his country’s service?’

‘I hope there will, my child,’ said Mr Littleton; ‘and if there is not we must be content, for his majesty cannot provide for all. I wish, my girl, it was in my power to convince him that I am still willing to fight for him, though the bread I eat from his bounty is but brown: but this poor stump,’ looking at all that remained of his right arm, ‘and this disabled leg,’ stretching it out as well as he could, ‘all my fighting days are over; I can only talk now, child.’

‘But you have fought bravely once,’ said Mrs Littleton, while a beam of exultation darted from her eyes.

‘And after all,’ cried Rebecca, ‘it is hard to be distressed for fifteen pounds.’

It was a clear frosty evening, in the beginning of January, when, in a little cottage, on the seacoast of Lincolnshire, Mr Littleton, an old superannuated lieutenant in the army, his wife, daughter, and two or three neighbors, were comfortably seated round a cheerful fire. The brown jug was just replenished, by the fair hands of Rebecca, and the song, the joke, and the tale went cheerfully round, when an unwelcome though not unexpected visiter, made his appearance, and threw a damp over their harmless mirth.

This was no other than their landlord’s steward, who came to demand the rent, in paying which they had been, from various disagreeable reasons, more backward than usual; it amounted to fifteen pounds, and the poor old man had no method whatever to raise the money. He had often made his distresses known to people in power, who had once styled themselves his friends, but never received any more than promises that something should be done; and hope had so often deceived him, that he now ceased to listen to her flattering voice, and was sinking into despondency, when the lovely Rebecca cheered him with the sentence at the beginning of the chapter.

Rebecca was the youngest of seven children, and the only one who lived to years

of maturity. She was at this time just sixteen, and had combined in her person all the beauty of a Venus, with the simplicity of a Grace. She possessed a striking figure, just tall enough to be elegant; her shape was symmetry, and her countenance one of those which may safely be pronounced more than beautiful; for, to the softest blue eyes, flaxen hair, and a complexion that outvied the lilies, was added such an inexpressible look of benevolence and candor, that it was impossible to see and not to love her. She had been taught by her father to read and write her own language correctly; by her mother some little knowledge of the French, and by the vicar's lady who was extremely fond of her, she had learned to play, with a considerable degree of taste, on the guitar; but being educated entirely in a domestic way, and never having past the boundaries of her native village, except once or twice to a neighboring fair, there was about her such an air of timidity, that, by the unobserving, might be mistaken for rustic bashfulness.

Though considered by her young companions as the *belle* of the village, in her own opinion she was ever the meanest, the least worthy of notice of any. Brought up in the strictest notions of the Protestant religion, such universal charity pervaded her soul, that she never suspected the worth and in-

tegrity of her fellow creatures ; but implicitly believed that every one, who professed to love or esteem her, spoke the genuine feelings of their hearts.

She harbored no thoughts which fear or shame prevented her revealing, for this reason, her actions and sentiments, were often open to the malevolent misconstructions of those, who, having art enough to conceal the real impulse of their natures, assume the semblance of those virtues, the reality of which is possessed only by the genuine children of simplicity.

In giving the character of Mr Littleton, we require but few words ; he was honest, possessed of valor, good sense, and a liberal education.

Mrs Littleton was twenty years younger than her husband, and was, when he married her, remarkably beautiful. She was the daughter of an exciseman, and at a country boarding school picked up a few showy accomplishments, but her mind had been totally neglected ; her sentiments were therefore narrow and illiberal, and she possessed that kind of worldly knowledge, which rendered her suspicious of the integrity of every human being.

The little knowledge Rebecca possessed of mankind, she had gleaned from a small but not ill furnished circulating library, to which, all the inhabitants of the village sub-

scribed. Her mind was highly tinctured with the romantic, but withal was enlightened with such a sense of honor, virtue and piety, that it was almost impossible to lead her to a wrong action; yet there were times when the fortitude of Rebecca was vulnerable. She could stand unmoved in a right cause against entreaty, persuasion, and even the severest threats; but she was not proof against the shafts of ridicule.

We have said that Mrs Littleton had been handsome; indeed she was so still, being at this period about forty-seven years old; for piercing black eyes, chestnut hair, and a florid complexion, gave her greatly the look of youth. This juvenile appearance of her mother was a great misfortune to Rebecca, for Mrs Littleton was ever more pleased with being told she looked like her eldest sister than being complimented with being the mother of so lovely a young woman; indeed she considered every compliment paid to her daughter as derogating something from her own merit. She considered her more as a rival than a child, and was happy in every opportunity to ridicule the feelings of a heart, of whose intrinsic worth she had no idea.

Rebecca could not sometimes help feeling the unkindness of her mother; but whatever those feelings were she suffered in silence; no complaint ever escaped her lips, but she endeavored, by the mildest acquiescence in

her every wish, to conciliate that affection which she would have considered as her greatest comfort.

‘It is hard, indeed, to be so distressed for fifteen pounds,’ said Rebecca: ‘I wish I could hit on any plan, by which my dear father might be relieved from his embarrassment. I have a great mind, if you will give me leave, to go tomorrow morning to lady Mary Worthy; I saw her last week at the vicar’s, when she asked me to come and see her, and said she would be happy to render me any service in her power.’

‘And do you really think she meant what she said?’ cried Mrs Littleton.

‘To be sure I do,’ replied Rebecca.

‘Then you are a fool,’ retorted the mother, ‘not to take it as it was designed, a mere compliment, which, she paid in respect to Mrs Alton, who, she saw, was rather partial to you.’

‘Dear mamma,’ said Rebecca, in an accent of surprise, ‘how can you think so?—There was no necessity for her to ask me, if she had not wished me to come, for, you know I am greatly her inferior.’

‘Don’t talk so silly, child! Do you suppose I wish every body to come to my house whom politeness obliges me to ask?’

‘I can only say, mamma, that I would never ask any person whom I would not be really glad to see when they came.’

‘I think, my dear,’ said Mr Littleton (‘tho’ I have the greatest respect imaginable for your opinion) that it would not be amiss for Rebecca to go to lady Mary; when she knows our situation she may be prevailed upon to request her son, sir George, to wait till we can make up the sum; I will, in the mean time, write to my old friend lord Antrim, perhaps he may get my small pension enlarged.’

Mrs Littleton remained silent, and it was agreed between Rebecca and her father, that the next morning she should visit Audley-Park.

At twelve o’clock, next morning, the lovely Rebecca, habited in a plain white jacket, a straw hat, and black cardinal, sat out for Audley-Park.

Lady Mary was alone in the library when she arrived, and, on the servant’s announcing her name, desired her to be immediately shown up.

‘Now this is really kind,’ said she, with the most condescending smile, advancing to the blushing Rebecca, and taking her hand, led her to the sofa on which she had been sitting, and seated herself by her side: ‘I flatter myself you are come to spend the day with me.’

‘Indeed, madam,’ replied Rebecca, ‘I was not so presuming as to hope for such an honor: I came to request—to entreat—

she faltered—the tears started in her eyes—lady Mary interrupted her.

‘Speak out, my love; do not be alarmed, but rest assured, I am ready to grant you any favor within the limits of my power.’

‘You are very good, madam; I hope you will pardon the liberty I have taken; but my father, madam—his income is but small—we are a twelvemonth in arrears in our rent—if you will kindly use your interest with sir George in our behalf—’

‘Surely, my dear, your agitation is unnecessary; I dare say my son has never thought of the rent.’

‘No, madam, I do not suppose he has, it is so trifling; but Mr Villars, his steward, asked for it last night, and was very angry.’

‘Indeed!’ said her ladyship, ‘was he angry?’

‘I do not mean to complain of Mr Villars, madam, for he has been very good to us, and often has waited a month or two for his money. You know, madam, he is only doing his duty when he demands it; for was he remiss in collecting the rents. sir George would certainly be offended with him.’

Lady Mary smiled at the eager manner in which Rebecca uttered this apology for Villars; but it was a smile of the utmost satisfaction, it convinced her of the goodness of her young vister’s heart.

‘I think,’ said she, ‘if some friend could

be found who would advance this sum for your father—'

'Alas! madam, how is it to be repaid?—unless, indeed,'—hesitating, blushing, and rising from her seat.

'Unless what, my sweet girl?'

'Your ladyship would generously lend me the money, and take me into your service, that I might render myself useful till it is repaid; or, if you think me too presuming, madam, perhaps, you could recommend me to a family where there are children.—I am not, it is true, accustomed to servitude, but I will exert my poor abilities cheerfully, and hope my willingness to oblige, will, in some measure, compensate for my awkwardness.'

'You are too good, and too lovely,' said lady Mary, 'for a servant; but you shall, if you please, come and live with me. I will settle this little difficulty of your father's, and shall think myself obliged if you will accept a trifle annually for your pocket expenses.' She then drew forth her purse, and presented the delighted maid with a twenty-pound bank note.

Grateful beyond the power of expression, Rebecca could only sink on her knees, press the hand of her benefactress to her lips, and smiling through the tears that gushed from her eyes, looked those thanks she found it impossible to utter.

‘Go, go, you are a simple girl I see,’ said her ladyship, raising and pushing her from her; ‘go, make your father happy, and, if you can obtain his assent to my proposal, tomorrow I will come and fetch you home; but I must have you mend that little heart of yours, it is a very poor one to go through the world with.’

‘It means well,’ replied Rebecca, trembling and confused, raising her timid eyes to the face of her benefactress.

‘Aye, aye, I am sure of that, but it is too honest by half; besides, your intelligent countenance betrays its every emotion.’

‘I hope, madam, it will never experience any that may not be revealed with impunity.’

‘Ah! my dear,’ said lady Mary, shaking her head, ‘you will, no doubt, one day find that it will be for your interest to disguise its feelings as much as possible.’

Rebecca then took her leave, and as she returned home, could not help thinking it very strange, and very inconsistent too, that sincerity should be deemed a virtue, and yet disguise be thought necessary to those who have much commerce with the world.

‘Well, Miss, what success?’ cried Mrs Littleton, as Rebecca entered the room; ‘I fancy you are convinced I was right, in supposing your vanity incited you to hope without foundation.’

‘Indeed my dear mamma, for once you were mistaken: lady Mary has received me kindly, and more than granted my request.’

She then, with most bewitching simplicity, related her interview at the Park, while Mr Littleton looked exultingly happy; but good mamma contracted her brow, and drawing herself up, as was her custom when any thing displeased her, said :

‘I hope, Mr Littleton, you will not think of letting the girl go: lady Mary certainly does not mean to take her entirely, and it will only be filling her head with idle notions, of which, heaven knows she has plenty already. Besides, what do we know of lady Mary? It is true she came down here last year, and remained about three months; but who can tell any thing of her character and morals? She may lead the girl into all manner of folly.’

Now the case was exactly this: the late sir George Worthy had purchased this estate but a few months before his death, and as lady Mary was a woman of a very retired turn, the short time she remained in the country she visited but few families, and those without ceremony. Lady Mary was truly benevolent, but she performed those acts herself, and not unfrequently made the silence and secrecy of persons benefitted, the only terms on which they were to hope a continuance of her favors.

She in general resided at a seat about twenty miles from London, to the end that she might scrutinize the conduct of a daughter, who was married to a dissipated young nobleman, and who, though blessed with a mother whose example might have led her on to every laudable pursuit, was so entirely swallowed up in the vortex of folly and dissipation, that she had not time to attend to the essential duties of a wife, mother, and mistress of a family.

In the place where lady Mary usually resided she was considered as a proud, unsocial woman, by the middling kind of gentry; by her equals as an oddity, and by her dependants as something superiorly good; she was by them beloved, respected, nay, almost adored as an angel of benevolence.

But Mrs Littleton seldom gave people credit for virtues which she had not the penetration to discover, though she could easily imagine them capable of practising deceit, inhumanity, or almost any vice that can disgrace human nature: she therefore thus continued her discourse to her husband—

‘People are not always what they seem to be; this lady may make very fair promises, and when once the girl is in her power, treat her as a common servant. I beg, Mr Littleton, you will not let her go.’

‘I am sorry, my dear love,’ cried Mr Littleton, ‘to differ from you in my opinion con-

cerning lady Mary's offer; I think our dear girl will be highly honored in her friendship and protection. You know, my dear, if she should find herself unhappy, she has a home, however homely, where she will be sure of being received with transport. I am growing old; when I am gone all is gone; it would be some comfort for me to reflect in my last moments, that my dear Rebecca was not likely to feel the pangs of want.—The small annuity I have purchased for you will supply the necessaries of life to one, but not both of you. I am as unwilling as you can be to part with her; but it is necessary she should be in some way of earning a support, and, I trust she has sense and fortitude sufficient to withstand every temptation to evil.'

'Oh! my father,' cried Rebecca, taking his hand, 'you may, indeed, depend on a child whose heart your precepts has trained in the love of virtue. Methinks, should I ever be tempted to stray into the paths of vice, your blest image will rise to my imagination; methinks I shall hear your persuasive voice say, 'Rebecca, wilt thou break thy father's heart?' Will it be possible, then, for me to proceed? Oh! no; the remembrance of you, like a talisman, will shield me from every danger.'

'Why, how the girl talks!' said Mrs Littleton: 'I declare she learns these things

out of the book she is forever reading; for 'tis not the language of the world; there is nobody hardly can understand her.'

'It is the language of the heart,' replied the father.

'Well, sir, you are to act as you please; but if any ill comes of it, don't blame me; don't say I drove her from home.'

'My dear, you talk of things which never could enter my mind. I know you will always be happy to have your child with you, strange if you are not so amiable as she is! But, as I said just now, I am growing old, I cannot remain much longer with you, and perhaps you may marry again.'

'Marry again! Mr Littleton you are surely trying to vex me. Ah! my dearest life, when I lose you I shall lose all my happiness; the rest of my life will be a continued scene of mourning; there is a degree of indelicacy in a woman marrying a second time, it is an insult to the memory of the first husband, of which I could not have believed you thought me capable. It has hurt me more than I can express,' and she burst into tears.

'All this now is nonsense,' said the old man, taking hold of her hand; 'for my part I see nothing in a woman's having two husbands; it is naturally to be expected when she is left a lovely widow in the prime of life, as you are now.'

‘No indeed, papa,’ said Rebecca, innocently, ‘there is nothing in it at all; it is as common as can be.’

‘Hold your tongue, Miss; do not talk so unfeelingly of the loss of your poor dear father.’

‘God send,’ cried Rebecca, clasping her hands fervently, ‘that for these many, many years, I may not experience so heavy an affliction as the loss of my revered parent: it would be a heavy stroke to us both, my dear mamma, but to me irreparable; for, though you might find another husband, where should poor Rebecca find another father?’ she turned away, covering her face with her hand, and sobbed aloud.

After much altercation, it was at length agreed, that Rebecca should accept lady Mary’s offer, and that Mr Littleton should himself go to the Park, that afternoon, to thank her for her bounty, and to request her kindest attention to the welfare and peace of his darling Rebecca.

Lady Mary received him with great politeness, and, after chatting some time with him, and assuring him of her protection to his daughter, she thus addressed him:

‘I feel myself much interested in the happiness of Rebecca, and for that reason, tho’ I mean to make her my companion, I shall not introduce her into company, or give her a taste for expensive pleasures. When I

have visitors, her meals will be served in her own apartment, when I am alone, which is the greater part of my time, she will eat and sit with me, reading, working, or amusing herself, as inclination shall prompt.

‘I will confess I have an interested motive for this conduct. I have a son, Mr Littleton, the last remaining branch of two noble families; I am sensible his heart is not invulnerable, and I am fully convinced that your daughter is the most lovely woman I ever beheld; but all charming as she is (pardon me, sir, it is my duty, in this point, to be sincere) I should not choose to see her the wife of my son, and I have too high a regard for her to expose her to trials to which her fortitude may be unequal. I do not scruple to say it would hurt my pride to see her his wife; but it would wound my sensibility to see her his mistress. My house at Twickenham is large; one part of it is seldom visited by any body but myself; here I mean to order her an apartment, and whenever I expect sir George, I shall request her to keep within it: however, as he is a very gay young man, I do not see him very often, and when he does come, he does not stay above two or three hours; therefore, Mr Littleton, let Rebecca know this, if she can bear solitude sometimes, and in general, retirement, I shall esteem myself happy to have her with me. If she dislikes the plan,

do not fear to inform me. I remember I was once young myself, and shall not be at all offended if I find youth and beauty unable to submit implicitly to the caprices of age. One thing more I must mention : I shall regularly visit Audley-Park once a year ; Rebecca shall always accompany me, and as we shall be out of all danger at those times, every amusement that I can procure she may depend upon enjoying.'

Mr Littleton was a man of sense : he was pleased with lady Mary's frankness, and readily conceived, that the proposed retired situation of his child would be the only thing to shield her from those snares and temptations to which a young woman is subject, who, possessed of beauty, wit, and sensibility, has neither rank nor fortune to recommend her to the serious attention of those who might pretend to admire, while they lead the unsuspecting innocent a victim to vice and seduction.

He returned home, and maugre the ill grounded suspicion of his wife, the next day but one was fixed on for the lovely Rebecca to attend her patroness, and enter on an entire new course of life.

CHAPTER II.

LADY MARY was not an early riser; Rebecca had been accustomed from her earliest infancy to leave her bed at six o'clock; she had, therefore, risen at her usual hour, the morning after her removal, and finding herself likely to be alone till ten o'clock, went into the library, and selected from among the many books there, sir Charles Grandison, for her morning amusement; the interesting pen of Richardson had so entirely charmed her attention, that she thought not of time till lady Mary made her appearance.

‘You have been reading, my love,’ said she; ‘are you fond of novels?’

‘I like these entertaining histories, madam; they always command my attention, and awaken my sensibility.’

‘It is dangerous, Rebecca, to indulge that sensibility too much; besides, my dear, you must not give way to an excess of feeling, when the tale you read is only a fiction.’

‘A fiction! madam; you surprise me. I thought they had been the histories of persons who had really existed.’

‘Far from it, child; human nature can never rise to such a pitch of excellence as this sir Charles Grandison is represented to be; nor will you among your own sex, be

able to find a woman like Miss Byron: besides, if you accustom yourself to think these high wrought scenes real, you will find the actual occurrences of human life so flat and insipid, that the very disappointment will render you disgusted with the world.'

Rebecca listened with attention, but still in her heart she thought, surely these amiable characters, these interesting scenes, are not all fiction. I shall certainly at some future period, meet with men and women as amiable as these are represented. She nourished this idea in silence, and dwelt on the delightful vision, till at last too fatally convinced, that to be perfect was not compatible with mortality. She wept over the errors of her fellow creatures, and lamented that reasonable beings in a world abounding with every comfort, should so ungratefully dash the cup of felicity from their lips, and eagerly drink of that which was strongly tinged with gall. It is easily in our own power to be happy, said she; but to render ourselves really miserable requires much art, contrivance, and solicitude; for, before we can be completely unhappy, we must forsake the commandments of our all-wise Creator; we must distrust his merciful providence, and render ourselves totally unworthy his heavenly protection.

But I am speaking of her maturer reflections, and forgetting that she is but just en-

tered upon the grand theatre of life. And to return :

The time was now nearly elapsed which lady Mary usually spent in Lincolnshire, which was two months before and one after Christmas, at which period she enlivened the hearts of all sir George's tenants, made the smile of tranquillity sit on the countenance of age, and softened the couch of pain and sickness.

And is not this the real incense to be offered at so glorious a season? Will it not go up as a sweet smelling sacrifice before the Most High? Oh! surely it will; the benevolent heart will ever be acceptable to him whose heavenly benevolence led him to suffer an ignominious death that we might live forever in glory unfading, in bliss unchangeable.

It was with infinite pain Rebecca parted from her father; nor did he experience less anguish. 'God preserve you my child,' said he, embracing her, 'remember the happiness of your poor father depends on your well doing.'

'Good bye, Rebecca,' said the mother; 'God bless you child, be careful, circumspect, and wary; suspect every one of a design on you till you are convinced of the contrary. You must think all men knaves, and all women treacherous, and then you will avoid many troubles. Trust no one;

keep your thoughts to yourself; if you are unhappy, bear your sorrow in silence, for no one will pity you if you tell it; the happy will only laugh at you, and the miserable have enough to do to feel for their own afflictions. If you are happy, be silent also; for if you boast of your felicity, some will ridicule the source whence it flows, and others will, from envy, endeavor to interrupt that happiness they cannot themselves enjoy: Keep your thoughts to yourself; have few acquaintances, fewer intimates, and no bosom friends. Friendship is a very pretty word, but there are very few true friends existing in the world. Remember what I say; the world is full of deceit; and silence and suspicion are the only things to secure you from its effects.'

'But suspicion is incompatible with Christianity,' said Rebecca; 'we are taught to judge not, that we be not judged.'

Mrs Littleton looked at her daughter with an air of surprise, but remained silent. Lady Mary pressed her hand, and led her to the chaise. Rebecca bowed to her parents, and before she was from distance deprived of the pleasure of beholding them, the tears effectually hid them from her view.

Their journey was pleasant: the novelty of the objects she encountered in a short time diverted her ideas, and before she arrived at Twickenham she was quite tranquil and

happy ; nay, she was even more cheerful than lady Mary had ever seen her before.

It was late when they alighted ; but the elegance of the house, the extent of the gardens, and the taste in which they were laid out, was full and pleasurable amusement to Rebecca the next morning. Her own apartment commanded a view of the Thames and its delightful banks ; she thought she should never be weary of standing at the window. ‘I will write my father an ample account of this charming place,’ said she ; but when she had rambled over all the pleasure grounds, alas ! thought she, it will be impossible to give him an adequate idea of its beauties. I must even request him to come next summer, and judge of it himself.

For eight months, happiness, pure, unalloyed happiness, took up her abode in the bosom of Rebecca. She read, she worked, walked, or played on her guitar alternately, as inclination led, and during that time she had been confined to her apartment but twice, once when lady Ossiter visited her mother, and once when sir George was expected to dinner.

Time now flew on the softest pinions with Rebecca ; every rising day brought increase to her happiness ; the tenderness and affection of lady Mary hourly increased ; she had discovered in her gentle companion

great taste for music, and a dawning of genius for drawing.

‘These are talents,’ said her ladyship, ‘that ever afford a fund of innocent amusement to the possessor, and it is certainly my duty, by cultivating them, to compensate, in some measure, for the cheerful acquiescence Rebecca shows to every desire of mine, particularly in submitting, without repining, to a recluse life, which most young persons, at her time of life, and possessed of her beauty and vivacity, would think cruel in the extreme.’

Lady Mary had received an education befitting her rank, and had not neglected the means of improving a very elevated understanding, and a bright natural genius, by refusing attention to the ample means of cultivation which fortune held out; on the contrary she made herself mistress of the fine arts, music and painting, and to the most delicate and judicious choice of the works of fancy, she added an extensive knowledge of history and natural philosophy.

To her, therefore, the cultivation of such a mind as Rebecca’s was a source of the most refined pleasure. She saw its beauties daily expand under her attentive care, with the same delight as the lapidary discovers the crust that envelops the rough diamond give way to his labors, and the ines-

timable jewel assuming a degree of brilliancy that promises well to reward his industry.

But though the talents of Rebecca were thus easily drawn forth, and the rusticity of her manners began to assume a more polished air, it was impossible to alter the simplicity and purity of her mind. Whenever her generous patroness endeavored to give her some idea of the manners of the world, she manifested such a degree of sweet incredulity, when informed of vices of which she had no idea, and was so ready to form excuses for errors of which she imagined few could be guilty, and none intentionally, that lady Mary was at length assured that nothing but experience would convince the innocent maid, that every bosom was not as free from guilt and treachery as her own.

‘My dear Rebecca,’ said she to her one day, ‘I will no longer labor to inform you of the vices and follies of mankind, the total ignorance of which seems to constitute your chief felicity. Long my sweet girl, may you retain that primitive simplicity of heart; it shall be my care to leave you at my death an independence, to prevent your charming unsuspecting nature from buying experience at so dear a rate, as an intercourse with, or a dependance upon the smiles of an unfeeling, misjudging world.’

Thus lady Mary determined; but, alas! like too many others, she deferred adding

this codicil to her will from day to day, till a sudden accident put it entirely out of her power.

The autumn was now advancing, and Rebecca looked forward to the time when she should revisit her native village. ‘And how will my dear father be delighted,’ said she, ‘to see and hear my improvements! To be sure there is no harpsichord in his cottage; but he will surely come to the Park, and then I will surprise him by playing some of his favorite airs: my mother too, I will request lady Mary to let me give her that piece of gray lustring she so kindly brought me from town last week. I will buy her also a new cloak and bonnet; she will be the gayest of all our neighbors;’ then taking out her portfolio, she selected some of her best drawings, and in her imagination, arranged them round her father’s little rustic parlor.

Lady Mary was that morning gone to Windsor on a visit to an old acquaintance, and Rebecca, having amused herself in her own apartment some time, in the manner already mentioned, at length took up her guitar, and opening a window which looked into a retired part of the garden, and into which darted the mild rays of a September sun—she tuned her instrument, and began to sing a little song, which she had learned but a few days before; it was of consequence a favor-

ite from its novelty, more than from its real beauty.

While Rebecca was singing, she had been so intent on her music, that she had not observed any body enter the part of the garden to which her window looked; but on laying down her guitar and turning her eyes that way, she perceived a young gentleman, in a riding dress, leaning against a tree, and gazing intently at her. The natural roses that played on her cheeks were heightened by this discovery. She arose hastily and was going to pull down the window, when the young gentleman advanced with a look of the most earnest supplication:

‘Stay one moment, angelic creature!’ said he, ‘and tell me if what I now behold is reality or an illusion? Art thou a spirit of light, or the loveliest human being the earth bears?’

‘Sir!’ cried Rebecca, with a voice and look of surprise, ‘did you speak to me?’ and she involuntarily suspended the hand that was raised to shut the window.

‘Oh! speak again, thou fairest of thy sex,’ said he. ‘Tell me, art thou indeed, a mortal?’

‘To be sure I am,’ said Rebecca, smiling; ‘what else should I be?’

‘And dost thou live here?’

‘Sometimes,’ replied Rebecca, with more

reserve, beginning to perceive the impropriety she was guilty of in talking to a stranger.

‘And cannot you either descend into the garden, or suffer me to visit the apartment that contains so much loveliness?’

‘I can do neither,’ said Rebecca, gravely, and she again raised her hand to draw down the sash.

‘O! stay an instant,’ said he ‘and tell me, all angel as thou art! did thy heart ever vibrate with the soft emotions of love?’

‘Sure, sure, it has! else I were ungrateful,’ she replied innocently. ‘I love my parents; I love my lady: yes heaven is my witness, how much, how fervently, I love her!’ She laid her hand on her heart, and raised her eyes with a look of grateful affection.

‘Enchanting simplicity! but do you love no other?’

‘Heaven forbid! I love all mankind.’

‘But no one in particular?’

‘No.’ Her uplifted hand fell from the sash, and her eyes were cast, first on the young gentleman, then on the ground.

‘Could you love me, sweetest?’

‘Methinks not, for you are rudely inquisitive.’

‘But you will not hate me?’

‘Hate you, sir! No; you never did me any harm, and if you had, I know it is my

duty to forgive you, and pray for your happiness.'

'Then you will not think of me with indifference?'

'That would be impossible,' said she, in a softened accent, as she pulled down the window. But he heard not what she said, and being no longer able to gaze on her, or listen to her voice, he retired from the garden in no enviable state.

Sir George Worthy was a young man of violent passions. At a very early age he had been made his own master, and like most young men of independent fortune, from unlimited indulgence, was led to believe, that the most trifling occurrence which thwarted his inclination, was an insupportable affliction; it was therefore a very great mortification to him to be obliged to quit the garden in such a state of suspense, especially as he did not know who the young lady was: however, he resolved to stay at his mother's house a few days (a favor which he had never deigned before since the death of his father) for he imagined this fair visitant would of course make her appearance at dinner, and, that after the first formal introduction, he should have the superlative satisfaction of enjoying her company in an unreserved way.

When lady Mary arrived she was much surprised to find her son in the drawing-

room; but as she had not the remotest idea of his having been long there, after the first salutations were past, she went to her own apartment, and dispatched Mrs Harley, her woman, to inform Rebecca, that, as she had company, she would order her dinner to be sent up, and should not expect to see her in the dining parlor.

Harley was not satisfied with simply delivering her message, but also delivered her own sentiments on the subject.

‘Heaven keep me from pride,’ said she. ‘One must be blind, indeed, not to see the cause of my lady’s confining you in this manner: mercy on us, as if flesh and blood without a title was not as good as flesh and blood with one! Marry come up, and I were to judge, I think you are to the full as good as sir George, mayhap better. All is not gold that glitters. I warrant ye, if sir George was once to see your sweet face, he would think a title well bestowed.’

‘I do not understand you, my good Harley,’ said Rebecca, with a look of the utmost simplicity.

‘O, it is all very well, Miss; if you are satisfied I am; only I say it is a shame to shut you up so whenever sir George comes.’

‘Sir George!’ cried Rebecca, eagerly; ‘is he here?’

‘Yes, Miss Becky, he is, and that is the reason—’

‘Hold, Harley; my lady’s commands are sufficient for me without any reason alleged: but pray how long has he been here?’

‘He arrived soon after my lady left home, and amused himself in the garden till a few moments before her return.’

‘’Tis very well,’ said Rebecca, ‘your mistress, perhaps, may want you. Do not let me detain you.’

Harley muttered something about insensible, and left the room.

Lady Mary, having adjusted her dress, repaired to the dining-parlor, and sent the butler to inform her son that dinner was served. With a palpitating heart sir George obeyed the summons; but how great was his surprise and disappointment, on entering the room, to see no person there but his mother, and the cloth laid but for two! His chagrin betrayed itself in his countenance.

‘Do we dine by ourselves, madam?’ said he, somewhat confused.

‘That is an odd question, George,’ said her ladyship. ‘I thought you were well acquainted with the recluse life I lead, and therefore could not expect to meet with company at my table.’

‘Why that is true,’ said he, with an assumed air of indifference, ‘but I thought sometimes a neighbor might drop in.’

He plainly perceived there was something of a mystery, and he was too much a

man of the world not to veil, as much as possible, the ardent desire he felt to penetrate it; he therefore partook of the repast provided for his mother, and when the cloth was removed, informed her he intended spending a week or ten days with her, previous to her departure for Lincolnshire.

Lady Mary was rather surprised at his proposal; but having long wished for an opportunity to converse with her son on a subject near her heart, namely, an union that had been for many years thought of between lady Eleanor Harcourt, her brother's only child, and sir George, for whom he had proposed to beg the title of earl of Chatterton, in reversion, he being the only male branch remaining of the family; she therefore satisfied herself by sending an affectionate note to Rebecca, briefly informing her of the cause that would occasion their separation for a few days, and assuring her she would visit her apartment the next morning if opportunity offered.

Rebecca sighed as she read the note; but she flattered herself it was a sigh of pleasure for the happiness her benefactress would enjoy in the company of her son.

In the course of the evening lady Mary introduced the subject nearest her heart, and endeavored to divine the real opinion sir George entertained of his cousin's person, merit and accomplishments.

He frankly acknowledged her a very amiable woman, a woman every way calculated to make the marriage state happy; 'but,' continued he, 'pardon me, my dear madam, if I say, I do not think myself by any means worthy the hand of such a woman. I am wild, and have seen so much of elegant, refined beauty, that it is no longer an object of admiration. I can look on my cousin Eleanor, all lovely as she is, without the least emotion, except what proceeds from the affection I bear her as a near and worthy relation; but this is not the kind of affection necessary to form a happy marriage. My heart has ever been unmoved by real passionate love, and I do believe if ever it is ensnared, it will be by the pure charms of nature, unadulterated by art: I declare to you the charming *naivete* of unaffected innocence would be to me a thousand times more captivating, than all the charms of an elegant accomplished woman of fashion.'

It is impossible to describe the astonishment of Lady Mary upon this unexpected declaration of her son; it kept her for some moments silent. 'It is well,' said she, mentally, 'that I took those precautions in regard to Rebecca; she is exactly the woman to suit his taste, and I should have experienced the mortification of seeing my son reject a title and splendid fortune, and ally himself to obscurity.'

‘Perhaps, George,’ said she, smiling, ‘you have somewhere met with a woman whom you think to be possessed of those captivating charms.’

‘O! no,’ said he, carelessly; ‘but why should we talk on this subject now? Eleanor and myself are both young enough yet. Let me see a little more of the world: it is more than probable I may not be the man of her choice.’

‘She will never have her father’s consent to marry any other; nor do I think he ever would forgive a step of that nature; nor can I say, George, that I should easily overlook your preferring any other woman to Eleanor.’

‘Upon my soul, my dear mother, this is a most ridiculous idea! In the name of common sense, why are two persons, who experience nothing more than indifference towards each other, to be chained together, and seal their own misery, to gratify the inclinations of those, who, though they have a right to our utmost respect and obedience, assume an undue authority when they endeavor to control us in a point so very delicate as the choice of a companion for life. I see you are offended, my dear mother; let me entreat you to pardon my sincerity. Believe me your happiness is the first wish of my heart, and to promote it shall be the whole study of my life. It is to prevent you

from future pain that I speak thus, for, alas ! what anguish must seize the heart of a parent who, having forced a beloved child into a loathed marriage, sees him plunged in misery, nay, perhaps in guilt, from which no power can extricate him : but let us not part in anger,' continued he, rising, and taking his mother's hand. ' Be assured, should inclination ever prompt me to a union with lady Eleanor, every transport I experienced will be heightened by the thought that it increased your felicity ; but should it not, let not your displeasure embitter the life of a son who loves you with the truest affection.'

He then kissed her cheek, and wished her a good night.

' He talks reasonably,' said lady Mary, as he left the room ; ' but it would grieve me to see the family of Harcourt sink into oblivion, when it is in his power to perpetuate both its name and title.'

Sir George had previously given his valet Le Brun an order to make inquiry obliquely concerning the fair recluse, whom he had seen at the window in the garden, and now retired with the eager expectation of hearing something of her.

' Well, Le Brun,' said he, ' what news ?— Can you learn whether the fair spirit of the garden haunts it continually, or only sometimes.'

' Oui, Monsieur,' said Le Brun, ' I did ask

Mademoiselle Harley. Oh! she be one ver pret voman; she never refuse me any thing. She be von jolie petite fille.'

'Good Monsieur,' said sir George, 'defer the account of your own success till another opportunity, and inform me of what you have heard.'

'Dat be vat I vas intend, my lor. Mademoiselle Harley tell me dat my lady, your moder, keep von ver charmante demoiselle, to play, to read, to sing to her when she be alone; but ven your onor, or any company be com, my lady do shut her up.'

'And who does Harley say she is?'

'Oh ma foi! she be de daughter of a pauvre old man, who vas one soldier. He live in Lincolnshire; de call her Mademoiselle Rebecca—'

'And does she constantly occupy those apartments in the south wing?'

'Oui, Monsieur, oui, and she valk every morning in de garden by de time de sun be up.'

This was enough for sir George. He dismissed Le Brun, and determined to rise by times himself, and join her in the garden.

In the mean time Rebecca's thoughts were fully employed in reflecting on the unexpected incident which had thrown her in the way of the very man whom it was her interest to wish to avoid. 'It was unfortunate,' said she, 'very unfortunate, that I should

have opened the window at that time; if lady Mary was to know I had seen and conversed with her son, it would make her very unhappy, and yet how shall I ever be able to face her after having, though involuntarily, transgressed the only restriction she thought fit to lay upon me? Will it not be best to watch the moment when she retires to her apartment, to go to her, candidly confess the accidental rencounter, and endeavor to deprecate the anger I must otherwise expect? Yes, it will certainly be right; my kind generous lady Mary shall never have occasion to accuse me of want of sincerity.'

When she had formed this resolution, her thoughts again reverted to the elegant, accomplished manner, and fine person of sir George; again, in idea, she recalled every sentence he had uttered, and innocently indulged the fascinating reflection, unsuspecting of the consequence.

The clock had just struck eleven, when she heard the footstep of lady Mary on the stairs. She heard her enter her dressing-room, and then, with palpitating heart, presented herself at the door of the apartment, and, by a gentle tap, demanded admittance.

Mrs Harley opened the door; pale, trembling, her eyes cast on the ground, the agitated Rebecca entered, and courtesying, in a manner in which the soul seemed to bow

more than the body, attempted an apology for the untimely intrusion.

‘Come in, my love,’ said lady Mary, then looking at her face, she continued, ‘are you not well, Rebecca, or has any thing alarmed you?’

‘Your goodness, madam, overpowers me,’ said she, seating herself; ‘my mind is not quite at ease, and, if you have a few moments to spare, I should be glad to communicate something to you, without any witness to our conversation.’

‘Harley,’ said her ladyship, ‘I shall not go to bed just yet, and will ring when I want you.’ (Harley retired.) ‘And now, my dear, what is this mighty secret?’ taking her hand.

‘I am come, my dearest lady,’ said she, rising, ‘to inform you, that I have, though undesignedly, broken your injunctions, and incurred your displeasure; let me therefore, madam, expiate my offence, by being banished from this delightful place, and from your truly valuable society. Send me back, madam, to my humble home; but, oh! I conjure you, do not deprive me of your friendship and good opinion, which I value infinitely more than any other earthly good.’

‘You surprise me, my dear child! I am at a loss to comprehend your meaning.—From the whole tenor of your conduct, since you have been here, I am convinced, that if you have offended me, the fault was invol-

untary indeed. Come, come, do not look so grave; I suppose this amazing fault, when revealed, will be discovered very trifling. You have let my favorite canary out of its cage, or you have broken one of the large India jars.'

'Ah! my dear lady, worse, infinitely worse, I have seen sir George. Now pray do not look angry; indeed, he is the first and only person I have seen since my arrival here; nor did I seek the interview.'

'Do not alarm yourself thus, my love,' said lady Mary, obliging her to sit down again. 'Come, compose your spirits, and tell me sincerely how it happened, what passed between you, and what you think of my son.'

'Oh! I think him,' said Rebecca, 'the most engaging young man I ever saw; he has such a manly look, yet such a soft air and voice.'

'Indeed!' said her ladyship gravely, 'and pray what might he say to you?'

'Ah! madam, it would be vanity in me to repeat all he said, he spoke so many fine things.'

'It is well; I see you still retain that candor and sincerity for which I ever loved you. I am fully satisfied that this interview was not sought on your side, nor can I suppose it was on his. You seem to entertain a very favorable idea of sir George, and I make no

doubt but he does the same of you; but do not from this indulge any vain hopes that you can ever be any thing to each other.—Young men of a certain rank in life, do not frequently match themselves with their inferiors, yet they will leave no art unassayed to awaken sensibility in the heart of every woman whom they affect to admire. Will you make me one promise, Rebecca, and without reserve, ever remember to keep it inviolate.’

‘Dear madam, do you, can you doubt me? Speak your commands; I am sure they will not be severe, and when I disobey you, from that moment may peace and joy be strangers to my bosom.’

‘Then promise me, my dear, that you will never, directly or indirectly, listen to any overtures of love which sir George may make, or give him the least encouragement; and while you keep the promise sacred, may every earthly happiness surround you; and should you ever feel inclined to break it, reflect it is the only thing which you can do to wound the peace of a woman who loves you as her own child.’

‘Then hear me, madam,’ said she, ‘while I solemnly protest that never, while I retain my senses, will I listen to any profession of love whatever from your son. The grateful affection I bear towards your ladyship will prompt me to keep this vow inviolable, had

I no other motive ; but, my dear lady, I have two powerful motives for never infringing it. The first, I trust, you will believe is an invincible repugnance inherent in my bosom to every thing derogatory to the dignity and honor of my sex, and which will urge me to treat with scorn every overture that tended to the injury of either. And for the other pardon me, madam, I feel my inferiority, nay, feel it so powerfully, that I will never meanly creep into a family who would think themselves dishonored by the alliance.'

'My dear good girl,' said lady Mary, embracing her, 'I honor you for this spirited reply. You would not dishonor any family ; but I never was a friend to unequal matches ; they are seldom productive of much felicity ; besides, my son is the destined husband of another.'

Rebecca heard her in silence, sighed, and was preparing to leave the apartment. 'Stay, my love,' said lady Mary, 'though you have charmed me by the frankness and candor of your behavior, I am not satisfied but George will attempt to see you again ; shall I request my dear girl will keep entirely in her apartment tomorrow, and avoid going to the windows, and in the evening a chaise shall be ordered to the back garden gate. My own man, James, shall attend you, and you may proceed one stage on your journey towards Lincolnshire that night. James will take

particular care of you, and see you safe to your father's house, where you can pay them a short visit, until I join you, which will be in about three weeks' time.' She then put a heavy purse into her hand, bade her consider it as her own, and then wished her a good night—but calling her back as she was about to leave the room, she desired her to be careful of what she said to Harley, and in particular to avoid mentioning her intended journey.

'Is it pride,' said Rebecca, as she retired to rest, 'or is it a tender wish for my felicity, that actuates lady Mary? Surely it is the latter. Her liberality, her condescending affection, all tend to convince me it is my happiness alone she is studious to preserve; and never shall it be said that Rebecca Littleton, like the ungrateful viper, stung the friendly bosom that warmed her into life; for surely the cultivation of our mental faculties, the enlargement of our ideas is a second, nay, a better life than what we receive from nature; and this life I have received from my revered benefactress. What delightful sources of pleasurable amusement has she opened to my view! How inestimable the benefits I have received from her hand!' Then her thoughts reverting to sir George, she continued, 'Surely the son of such a mother must be all that is good and amiable, and it is not infringing my vow to

love him as a brother. Ah! how happy will be the partner he shall choose, nay, that he has chosen; for did not his mother say his destiny was fixed? May their felicity be as lasting as their lives! May every earthly blessing crown them! May heaven shower down its bounties on their heads, that their joys may render completely happy the heart of my kind, my generous lady Mary!

Then lifting up her soul in its nightly address to the Throne of grace, she blended the name of sir George with that of his mother, and sunk into that peaceful kind of slumber, which only innocence, like hers, can enjoy.

CHAPTER III.

SMALL was the rest sir George enjoyed that night, and soon as the morning peeped into his chamber he left his bed, and repaired to that part of the garden where Le Brun had informed him Rebecca usually walked; but in vain was this early attention, vain the anxious expectation in which he waited, the goddess of his morning adoration did not make her appearance; nay, even so scrupulous was she of her lady's injunctions, that she kept the window-shutters closed on the side next the garden, and only opened

one that looked on a grass plot that faced lady Mary's apartment.

'Till near nine o'clock sir George walked in the hope of seeing Rebecca; but finding those hopes frustrated, he returned, highly disappointed, to his apartment, and prepared to meet his mother at breakfast.

'She has not been out, Le Brun,' said he, as his valet was tying his hair; 'I have walked three hours for nothing.'

'Oh! Monsieur will have bon stomache to his dejeuner.'

'Damn the breakfast,' said sir George. 'What could keep the lovely girl from walking as usual this morning?'

'She be no wake yet,' said Le Brun. 'Mademoiselle Harley tell me she no ring her bell yet.'

'Then Harley attends her?'

'She want ver lit attendance; she be von amiable.'

'But Harley answers her bell?'

'Oui, Monsieur, oui, no oder do go to her chamber.'

Sir George started from his seat, wrote a few hasty lines, and bidding Le Brun give them to Harley with five guineas, desired they might be delivered into the hands of Rebecca.

When Harley attended our heroine at breakfast, she laid the letter on the table.

‘And what is this, Mrs Harley?’ said she, taking it up.

‘A letter, Miss, which I was desired to deliver into your hands.’

‘From whom does it come?’

‘A sweet rich gentleman, my dear young lady, who having once seen you, wishes again to enjoy that satisfaction—From sir George Worthy.’

‘Well then, my good Harley, take it to your lady, desire her to read it, and dictate the answer she would wish me to send; or stay, I will enclose it in a blank cover, and you deliver it to the person who intrusted it to your care.’

‘Why, surely,’ said Harley, ‘surely, Miss Becky, you do not reflect on what you are doing! Sir George is a man of fortune, a handsome, agreeable man.’

‘His beauty, to me, Mrs Harley, would be his last recommendation. Besides, I hope ever to make it an invariable rule of my conduct to receive no letters from men, without the sanction of those who are better judges of what is proper than I can be; but, as it will be needless to trouble my lady with this, give me that sheet of paper from the writing desk.’

Harley gave her the paper; she folded up the letter, sealed it, and gave it to her.

‘But you have not directed it, Miss.’

‘There is no necessity for directing it.

Do you deliver it to the person who gave it to your care.'

'Ah! Miss, I think you will repent, for Le Brun tells me sir George loves you to distraction. He has been walking in the garden these three hours in hopes of meeting you.'

'I am vastly obliged to him,' said Rebecca, smiling, while her cheeks assumed a deeper glow, and her eyes a brighter lustre.

'But you do not pity him, though his heart is almost breaking!'

'I do pity him, Harley, indeed I do; and if he were poorer, or I were richer—'

'Ah! Miss, love levels all distinctions.—Sir George would think himself the person obliged. He told Le Brun you were the only woman he ever thought on with partiality.'

'Mrs Harley,' said Rebecca, opening a drawer of a small cabinet, 'do me the favor to accept these pieces of lace; I never had an opportunity before of giving you some small token of my gratitude for your kind attention to me since I have been in this family. But, good Mrs Harley, you must never talk to me in this manner again. I beg you will not tell me any thing that Le Brun says; I have no *desire*—that is—it is not proper—I must not listen to such discourse.'

Harley, simpering, withdrew, and the innocent Rebecca little imagined she had be-

trayed a secret which she ought to have guarded with the utmost care ; nay, she even did not think that her heart was the least interested in sir George's welfare, any otherwise than, as the son of her benefactress, it was her duty to rejoice in his felicity.

The remainder of the day Rebecca spent in arranging her clothes, &c. for her journey ; nor did she forget, among her music, to put the new song. 'It is certainly extremely pretty,' said she, and she sung it to herself all the day.

Towards the evening lady Mary rang for Harley.

'Harley,' said she, 'I think you have a brother at Windsor. I have ordered a chaise for Miss Littleton to take a ride this evening, therefore, if you like, -you may go with her. Be set down at your brother's, and stay all night, I will call for you tomorrow as I take an airing.'

Harley, who little suspected the scheme that was in agitation, readily embraced this opportunity of visiting her brother. She looked about for Le Brun, to inform him of her intended absence ; but lady Mary had taken care to send him out of the way.

Her ladyship took a very affectionate leave of Rebecca, told her James had received every necessary order, and again thanked her for the integrity of heart she had so nobly shown in having no conceal-

ments from her, and promised her, that her friendship, for herself and family, should be manifested even after her death. She then returned to the drawing-room, and kept sir George engaged in conversation till she imagined Rebecca was departed.

Sir George, though mortified by the return of his letter unopened, yet conceived great hopes from the account Harley gave him of their conversation, and determined to watch carefully for an opportunity to see and personally plead his own cause to his fair enslaver; but he cautiously concealed these thoughts from his mother, whom he was far from imagining was at that very moment counteracting all his schemes.

In the mean time Rebecca continued her journey, and by noon, on the second day of her departure, she found herself drawing very near her father's cottage.

'Ah!' said she, 'how surprised and delighted will the dear old gentleman be to see me arrive so unexpectedly; nay, I think, even my mother will rejoice to see me after so long an absence.' Then, in idea, she ran over all she had to relate to them. 'And how my father will applaud my conduct!' said she exultingly. 'Surely there can be no pleasure in this world equal to the applause of a parent whom we love, and whom it has ever been our study to obey.'

The chaise drew up to the door. She

looked towards the parlor window; no one appeared. 'I am afraid they are not at home,' said she; but casting her eyes up to the chamber, she saw the window curtains close drawn. At that instant Ruth, their faithful servant, appeared at the door.

'Oh! dear, Miss,' said Ruth, in a tone of sorrow, 'I did not think you could have come so soon.'

'What is the matter?' cried Rebecca, springing from the chaise, and seizing the hand of Ruth in breathless agitation.

'Your poor father!' said the servant.

'Oh, God! my father is dead!'

'No, my dear Miss, not dead; but very—very ill.'

'Merciful heaven!' cried Rebecca, sinking on her knees, with uplifted hands and streaming eyes, 'restore him to my prayers, or let me not live to know his loss.'

The transition was so great from pleasure to extreme sorrow, that she could no longer support it, but fainted in the arms of Ruth.

On her recovery she found her mother by her side. She threw her arms round her neck, wept audibly on her bosom, but could not speak.

'Ah! child, you may well cry,' said Mrs Littleton, 'for your father is not expected to live one hour after another.'

'Then lead me to him, dear mother; lead me to him, that I may receive his blessing,

and catch his last sigh. Ah! he must not die without a parting embrace to his Rebecca.'

Mrs Littleton made no reply, but proceeded slowly up the stairs. Rebecca followed, and in a moment found herself by the bedside of her almost expiring father. He put forth his hand—she pressed it to her lips, and sunk in speechless agony on her knees.

'Do not lament thus, my dear child!' said he faintly: 'heaven's will be done! I trust you have found a protector in lady Mary, and shall go satisfied with that comfortable reflection.'

'Protector! indeed,' cried Mrs Littleton, peevishly; 'heavy was the day when she left her home for the protection of strangers! I am sure you have never been well since. This illness is all her fault. You have done nothing but pine and mope about, and if any thing happens it will lay at her door; but she was so eager forsooth to go, any where rather than home, she was tired of the company of her old father and mother.'

'Do not, my dear love,' said Mr Littleton, 'do not embitter my last moments by laying on the mind of this poor girl more than she can bear. Behold her anguish, and pity it. Do not attribute my illness to so wrong a cause. My frame has long been decaying: I felt it myself, though I forbore to afflict

your bosom by mentioning my apprehension.'

'Oh! my father,' cried Rebecca, 'I hope you will recover. I hope—'

'Do not deceive yourself, my dear; my disorder is a decay of nature, and a slow nervous fever, which the physician informed me yesterday it was impossible to remove. I then desired your mother to send for you; but tell me, my child, how is it possible you could have arrived so soon?'

'Alas!' replied Rebecca, 'I did not know you were ill till I arrived at the door. I came by my lady's desire to spend a few weeks with you and my mother before she comes into the country.'

'You have not offended her, Rebecca?' said her father.

'No, indeed,' said she exultingly; 'I am higher in her esteem than ever.'

'Ah! so she may tell you,' cried Mrs Littleton; 'but I will answer for it she was tired of your company, or she would never have sent you away before her; so there is an end of your fine hopes, Miss Becky.'

It was with the utmost uneasiness that Rebecca beheld her mother thus prejudiced against her. She endeavored to recollect if any inadvertent expression, in any of her letters, had given her cause of offence; and in hopes to conciliate her good humor, she, in the evening, opened her trunk, and pre-

sented her mother with the silk before-mentioned.

She received it sullenly, and laying it down, without scarce deigning to look at it, said, 'This is no time to think of fine clothes, child, though in my heart I believe your thoughts never run on any thing else but dress, and fashion, and nonsense.'

The truth was, that if Rebecca had a foible, it was a passion for fashionable dress; but this was never carried to an extreme, and, though remarkably attentive to the decoration of her person, she was never fine or tawdry.

This ill-timed reproach of her mother's filled her eyes with tears, and she retired to bed, but not to rest; her father's illness, and the distance she then was from her benefactress, were such painful reflections, that sleep was a stranger to her eyes till the morning began to dawn, when she enjoyed a few hours of composed slumber.

Mr Littleton's disorder daily increased. He found his end nearly approaching, and frequently recommended to his daughter to preserve, after his death, the same dutiful respect she had ever manifested.

To Mrs Littleton he did not fail to recommend a tenderness of behavior, that might tend to invite the confidence of Rebecca.—'You are too harsh with the poor girl,' he

would say, 'treat her kindly : I am sure you will find her deserving of it.'

'I know her better than you do,' was the constant reply, 'and I know she is an artful designing girl.'

Mr Littleton could not believe any ill of his favorite, and died in her arms on the fifth day after her arrival, blessing her with his last breath.

CHAPTER IV.

SIR GEORGE had not really determined in his own mind whether he would address Rebecca on an honorable score, or merely gain her affections, and then act as he should find, from her manner and disposition, she deserved.

That day and the next he waited patiently in the hope of seeing her; but on the third, when Harley returned, (for lady Mary did not bring her home till that time,) how great was his surprise and disappointment to hear that Rebecca had been sent for into the country to a relation who was ill; for Mrs Littleton's letter arriving the day following Rebecca's departure, it served as a sufficient apology for her absence, though indeed lady Mary did not think proper to enter into any explanations with her woman,

and rather misled her, by mentioning Bristol as the place where Rebecca's sick friend resided.

Though Sir George had previously informed his mother that he proposed accompanying her into Lincolnshire, he no sooner heard that the object of his pursuit had taken a different route, than he determined to follow her.

'I have thought better of it,' said he to her ladyship; 'I shall not visit my tenants this year, for I have several engagements in town which I cannot well put off; besides, I forgot that I had promised a friend of mine to accompany him to Bath.'

'Ah! my good George, your journey will be in vain,' thought his mother.

In a few days he left Twickenham, and immediately set out with post-horses for Bristol, where both himself and Le Brun were extremely diligent in their inquiries, though the reader may easily imagine to how little effect. However, he still continued, and nourished the hope, that by some chance or other he should discover the residence of the fair Rebecca; for as he could not suppose the situation of her friend very splendid, he thought it needless to inquire for her among people of fashion; but he desired his valet to be very minute in examining every house where they let lodgings.

Three weeks had now elapsed since Re-

becca's departure, and lady Mary was preparing to visit Lincolnshire, when, as she was conversing with her daughter, lady Ossiter, one morning, she was suddenly seized with a fainting fit, which was succeeded by several others, and left her so weak and low, that her physician thought her life in imminent danger.

Alarmed at this intelligence, she desired Harley to write immediately for Rebecca to return, and, calling for pen and ink, determined no longer to delay making the poor girl independent; but when she took the pen and attempted to write, her faintness returned, and she was totally unable to execute her purpose; but resolved to do something for her, she called lady Ossiter to her, and thus addressed her:

‘There is a young woman of the name of Littleton, who has been with me some time, though now she is in the country. She is of a sweet disposition, and it was my intention to leave her, at my death, a thousand pounds. I request you, my child, to pay her this sum as soon as you conveniently can, after my decease, and also give her my watch, a small picture set with pearls, and this ring, (taking one from her finger.) I hope she will arrive time enough to be informed from my own mouth of my intentions in her favor; but should she not, I

trust you will not be neglectful of the desire of a dying mother.'

It was with great difficulty and many interruptions, that lady Mary made known to her daughter this her request. Lady Ossiter promised obedience—but alas! she seldom remembered her promise, however sacredly given. It was impossible to give Sir George notice of his mother's danger, for no one knew where he was.

Lady Mary continued tolerably composed all that night, but the next day her fits returned, and she expired in the evening.

When Rebecca received the news of her benefactress' illness, she ran to Audley Park. James was still there. 'Your lady is very ill, James,' said she, 'I must set off immediately for Twickenham.'

'And I will attend you, Miss,' said James, eagerly, 'only say when you will like to go, and I will order the chaise.'

'I will go the moment you can procure one,' said she. 'I thought you would go with me, James, and indeed I should not like to take such a long journey by myself; but do not order a horse, my good James, we shall travel faster if you ride with me in the chaise. I could not bear to have you hurrying after me on horseback.'

James had lived with lady Mary from the day of her marriage. He had served his mistress with the truest fidelity, and tears

gushed from his aged eyes when he heard of her danger.

When Mrs Littleton found Rebecca was determined to obey Harley's summons, she conceived it was a high and unpardonable breach of filial duty, for her to think of leaving a mother in so early a state of widowhood.

'You give me a great proof of your affection, Miss,' cried she, scornfully, 'to leave me in so much affliction and fly post haste after strangers. However, we shall see who is most worthy your attention, if my lady gets tired of you.'

Though Rebecca was greatly hurt by these unjust reproaches, it did not prevent her intended journey, for she set off that evening, attended by James; and, indeed, in her own mind, firmly resolved that nothing but absolute necessity should oblige her ever again to visit Lincolnshire, except with her patroness.

It was late in the evening when she arrived at Twickenham. The sad countenance of the domestic that opened the door, led her presaging heart to fear the worst.

Harley met her in the hall, pressed her hand in silence, and proceeded to light her to her usual apartment.

Rebecca hardly dared breathe as she ascended the stairs; on passing the dressing-room of her friend, she stopped, looked ear-

nestly at her attendant, and laying her hand on her heart, cried :—‘tell me the truth—’ but her respiration became so short she was unable to go on.

‘All is over.’

‘I feared so,’ cried Rebecca ; then turning into her own room, she sank on the bed in a state of insensibility, which continued some time.

Harley endeavored to restore her, and at length succeeded. Rebecca raising her clasped hands to heaven, exclaimed, ‘Thy will be done ;’ and the salutary drops of sorrow gushed in a torrent from her eyes ! Harley was pleased to see them flow, and imagining that to leave her to the free indulgence of them would be best, retired to inform lady Ossiter (who had not yet left Twickenham) that our heroine had arrived.

‘I will see her in the morning,’ said she, carelessly, ‘take her with you to the house-keeper’s room.’

‘She is in her own apartment, madam. She never associated with even the upper servants.’

‘O ! she is quite the fine lady, I suppose ; how could you endure the creature’s pride ?’

‘I never discovered that she had any.’

‘My mother used to say that she was very handsome,’ said her ladyship, looking in the glass.

‘I believe every one thought so who look-

ed at her. Sir George was greatly struck with her beauty, though he saw her only once.'

'Well, so much the better; I suppose he will take the trouble of providing for her off my hands; don't you think so?'

'Indeed, madam, I have often thought she would one day be his wife.'

'Woman!' said lady Ossiter, turning hastily round, with a look of the utmost contempt, 'how could such an idea enter your mind? His wife, indeed! No, I think George knows better than that; he may, perhaps, make her his mistress; but go, good woman, go, you have made me quite sick by the horrid suggestion.'

'Poor Rebecca,' said Harley, to herself, as she left the imperious lady: 'poor girl, you will see a sad change, I fear. You have lost your best friend, and so have we all indeed; for though my late dear lady was proud, she never wanted humanity.'

When the mind of Rebecca became a little composed, Harley prevailed on her to take some refreshment. She then inquired in which room the remains of her dear benefactress lay.

'In her own dressing-room, as yet, but to-morrow she is to be removed.'

Rebecca said but little more, and Harley, thinking the fatigue of her journey, and the agitation of her mind combined, might incline

her to go early to rest, removed the supper table and wished her a good night.

No sooner was Rebecca alone, than she gave way to a fresh burst of grief; the loss of her father was again renewed, the unkindness of her mother now was remembered with double anguish, and her own friendless situation struck so forcibly on her mind, as to make her sorrow almost insupportable.

At length her tears seemed exhausted; a kind of torpid calm succeeded, and she determined to visit the chamber of death.

With hasty and unequal step she reached the door of the apartment, opened it, and paused for a moment to summon all her fortitude. The attendants in the adjoining room heard her enter and approached to console her; but she waved her hand in silence for them to retire, and they, respecting her too much to attempt an intrusion on her grief, left her to the free indulgence of it.

She placed the light she held on a table, and approaching the coffin, gazed with reverential awe on the countenance which had often beamed on her looks of the kindest benevolence.

‘Dear and only friend,’ said she, ‘since thou art gone, where is there a heart remaining that feels one spark of affection for the poor Rebecca? O, my more than mother, thy adopted child is now bereft of every earthly comfort! Spirit of purity, look down

from the mansions of felicity, and hear the vows I here repeat—never to infringe one command of your's while life warms my heart. While you lived, it was my pride, my glory, to deserve the affection with which you honored me; and it shall still be my study to preserve, to the latest hour of my life, my integrity unshaken: though you can no longer be sensible of my respect and love, sacred shall be your memory to my heart.'

Here her feelings overpowered her; her head sunk on her hand—her tears again burst forth—her lips continued to move—but articulation was denied.

At this instant the door opened and sir George entered. He started, involuntarily, on beholding Rebecca. Her pensive attitude, her depressed countenance, plainly depicted the sorrows of her heart; the afflicted maid had not heard his approach. He drew near and laid his hand on one of hers. She raised her timid eyes, looked at him mournfully, pointed to the coffin, and cried emphatically—'She is gone forever!'

Sir George really loved and respected his mother; nor had he heard of her illness, when the public prints announced her decease. Shocked beyond measure, he took post-horses, and never stopped, even for necessary refreshment, till he alighted at his mother's gate, faint and fatigued. He asked if his sister was there, and being informed

she was in the drawing-room, he went hastily up stairs ; but how was he disgusted on entering the room to see the unfeeling daughter of so good a mother receive him without any emotion.

She arose, presented her cheek, was glad to see him, slightly mentioned the melancholy event, and soon after asked him if he intended ordering a mourning coach, or only to put his servants in black? ‘I think,’ continued she, ‘the mournings are much shorter than they used to be, and nothing near so deep: for my own part I detest mourning, it makes one look so dismal.’

Just then lord Ossiter entered, and proposed a game at cards, by way of whiling away the evening.

‘Ah! do join us, George,’ said his wife, ‘I have been moped to death for a week.’

‘I am not in a humor for amusement, sister,’ said sir George, coldly; ‘and since you have no feeling yourself for the irreparable loss we have sustained, I shall not trouble you with mine, but retire where I may indulge them uninterrupted.’

How great must be the contrast then between this unfeeling sister, and the affecting sensibility of Rebecca! He pressed her passive hand in silence, mingled his tears with hers, and found his heart insensibly relieved.

‘My poor mother,’ said he, after a pause.

of a few moments, 'little did I think when we parted, it was the last time!'

'She is undoubtedly happy,' said Rebecca, in some measure forgetting her own sorrow, and wishing to convey consolation into the bosom of sir George.

'Oh! I know she is,' replied sir George; 'if the practice of every virtue can insure felicity, she is happy beyond what our weak imaginations can paint.'

Rebecca's tears streamed afresh. 'Ah! my dear mother,' said he, 'your loved remains are embalmed by the tears of grateful affection, though thy daughter, forgetful of thy worth, can amuse herself with trifles, and neglects the tribute due to thy memory.'

'Ah!' said Rebecca, 'I never can forget her—never wish it; for the remembrance of her virtues will emulate me in the attempt to imitate them.'

She pressed her lips to those of her clay cold benefactress, faintly and tremulously pronounced the word 'farewell!' and rushed hastily out of the apartment.

The next morning, at twelve o'clock, Harley summoned her to attend lady Ossiter.

On entering the dressing-room, she found her ladyship deeply engaged with her mantua-maker, and milliner. She did not even notice the entrance of Rebecca; but thus continued her directions to the former of her tradeswomen:

‘Let them be made as elegant and as full as possible; but at the same time, remember, I wish to pay every necessary respect to my poor mother. It was a very sudden thing. Mrs Modely, you cannot think how it shocked me; my nerves will not be settled again this fortnight, I dare say; then a thing of this kind forces one to be mewed up, and see no company, so I thought I might as well stay where I was, as go to town. But, as I was saying, Modely, let my white bombazine be very handsome, and full trimmed with crape: I do not mean to keep from visiting above a fortnight, and, I think, in a month or six weeks I may wear white muslin, with black crape ornaments, for undress.’

The accommodating mantua-maker consented to all the lady said, when, turning round to speak to her milliner, lady Ossiter was struck by the elegant person, and modest humble countenance of Rebecca.

‘Oh! I suppose,’ said she, carelessly, ‘you are the young woman my poor mother mentioned in her last moments?’

Rebecca courtesied assent, but was unable to speak.

‘Ah! she was very good to you, I understand. Well, don’t make yourself uneasy, I will be your friend in future.’

She attempted to express her thanks; but

her emotions were so violent, she was forced to continue silent.

‘I dare say, child,’ said her ladyship, ‘you have some taste in dress; come, give me your opinion about the caps I have ordered. Here La Blond, show her those caps: well now, what do you think, will these be deep enough? for, though I hate mourning, I would not be wanting in respect; one’s friends are apt enough to say ill-natured things; one can’t be too cautious in giving them occasion. Do you think I should go without powder? You look monstrous well without powder; but then you have light hair, and your black dress, tho’ so very plain, is becoming. Who are you in mourning for, child?’

Rebecca was struck almost speechless with astonishment.

‘Good heavens!’ said she, mentally, ‘can this be the daughter of lady Worthy?’

‘Who are you in mourning for, child?’ said lady Ossiter.

‘My father, madam.’

‘Oh! you have lost your father. Well it can’t be helped, old folks must be expected to fall off. You must not be low spirited if you are with me: I hate low spirited people, though since I lost my poor mother I have been low enough myself; but I endeavor to shake it off as much as I can; it is of no manner of use to grieve; when folks are

once dead, we can't recal them, though we fretted ourselves blind.'

'But we cannot always command our feelings, madam,' said she.

'No, child, that is true. I am sure I often wish my feelings were not so delicate as they are; it is a great affliction to have too much sensibility. Pray what is your name, my dear?'

'Rebecca.'

'That's a queer old fashion name. I remember when my mother used to make me read the great family Bible; I remember then reading about Rebecca Somebody; but, Lord! child, 'tis a vast vulgar name; I'd alter it if I were you; one never hears of such a name among people of any refinement.'

'I am sorry it does not please your ladyship,' said she, almost smiling at her absurdity; 'but as I was christened by it, I must be satisfied with it.'

'Well, then, Rebecca, but what is your other name?'

'Littleton, madam.'

'Ah, Lord! they are both three syllables; that is so tiresome. Well, but, Rebecca, (for I like that name best on account of its oddity) should you have any objection to enter into my service?'

'Far from it, madam: I shall cheerfully

serve any part of the family of my dear departed lady.'

'Ah! but I am not quite so sentimental as my mother was: I shall not want any person to work and read by me. I shall want you to be useful: now, for instance, to make up my morning caps, to trim my muslin dresses. Can you speak French, child?'

'Yes, madam, and shall be happy to render myself useful in any thing within the compass of my power. I do not wish to eat the bread of idleness.'

She spoke with a degree of spirit that surprised lady Ossiter: however, she unabashed proceeded:

'I have two little boys and a girl; I really have not time to attend to them: now I could wish you to hear them read, give them some little knowledge of the French, and take care of Miss Ossiter's clothes. Can you make frocks?'

'I make no doubt but I can, if I try, and my utmost endeavors shall not be wanting.'

'That is well. I understand my mother did not suffer you eat with the servants, so you shall have your meals in the nursery with the children. I suppose if my woman should happen to be ill, or out of the way, you would have no objection to dress or undress me.'

'I am afraid I should be awkward, madam; but if you will pardon my want of ex-

perience, you shall always find me ready to obey your commands.'

'And what wages do you expect?'

'Whatever you please.'

'What did my mother give you?'

'I had no settled salary.'

'Well, but I like to know what I am about. I'll give you sixteen guineas a year.'

Rebecca agreed to the terms, and, retiring to her apartment, left lady Ossiter to finish her consultation with her milliner and mantua maker, while she took up her pen, and informed her mother that she had entered into a new line of life, in which she hoped to be enabled to do her duty, and gain the approbation of her lady.

CHAPTER V.

DURING the time that intervened between the death of lady Mary, and her interment, sir George, though he frequently thought of Rebecca, made no attempt to see her, but satisfied himself with sending every day to inquire after her health.

'It is certainly a very improper time,' said he, 'to think of entertaining her on the subject of love. Her heart is at present overcharged with sorrow; besides, I should prove myself unworthy of her esteem, could I, at

this melancholy period, think seriously on any thing but the mournful cause of our meeting.'

The morning after the last solemn ceremony was performed, sir George, sitting at breakfast with his brother and sister, mentioned that, in respect to his mother's memory, he should remain at Twickenham a couple of months, and see no company but one or two select friends: he then invited lord and lady Ossiter to remain with him during that period, and proposed sending immediately for the children.

'You'll pardon me, brother,' said her ladyship: 'I cannot think of remaining any longer in this melancholy place than till tomorrow, and I must say you are much to blame, in resolving to bury yourself from the world: I am sure it is a step which cannot be expected from so young a man.'

'You are to act as you please, sister, and, I hope you will permit me to do the same.'

'Oh! *apropos*, you know the young woman, Rebecca—what's her name? I never can remember it. She that my mother kept with her as a kind of companion.'

'I have seen her,' said sir George, 'and cannot but be surprised my mother made no mention of her in her will; but, I suppose she desired you to make some provision for her.'

‘Yes, she did mention her to me, and I have taken her into my protection.’

‘Here lord Ossiter, who had been carelessly looking over the newspaper, laid it down.

‘So then,’ said he, with an air of curiosity, ‘your ladyship has taken her as a companion; but, pray, if that is the case, why is she not at the breakfast table, to save you the trouble of making the tea?’

‘Oh! you labor under a vast mistake, my lord; no humble toad-eater will ever make a part of my household, I assure you. I detest the whole class of them; they are in general a set of forward, impertinent creatures, made up of pride and idleness: I keep nobody about me who cannot render themselves useful; and I know of no use your cringing companions are but to criticise their ladies’ actions, and contribute to their lords’ amusement.’

His lordship looked disappointed, and resumed the newspaper.

Sir George was perfectly astonished at his sister’s ill-bred expressions; but willing to know in what manner Rebecca was provided for, simply asked the question.

‘Why, I have taken her into the nursery, to teach the children to read.’

‘I approve the plan vastly,’ said lord Ossiter, again laying down the paper: ‘I think the children wanted a governess.’

‘Not so fast, my lord ; I have as great a dislike to governesses as to companions. I hate the whole class of your second-hand gentry. Rebecca will hear them read, dress and undress Miss Ossiter, make her frocks, and upon occasion, assist my woman.’

Sir George felt his cheeks glow with indignation. ‘I think, sister,’ said he, ‘considering the place she held in our mother’s esteem, the situation you mean to give her is not paying that dear woman’s memory a proper respect ; besides, I do not think it probable, after having been treated as the companion of lady Mary, Miss Littleton will feel herself satisfied with being only the servant of her daughter.’

‘Don’t make yourself uneasy about that, George ; I have talked with her, and agreed about terms : however, if you choose to retain her here as housekeeper extraordinary,’ attempting an arch look.

‘To cheer the solitary days of mourning,’ added his lordship.

Sir George darted at them both a look of the utmost contempt. ‘Your inuendoes,’ said he, ‘are as cruel as they are groundless : however, lady Ossiter, you will please to know, that no person that has been honored by the friendship of my mother, shall be treated with disrespect, when I have the power to prevent it. If Miss Littleton is not

satisfied with her situation, I shall think it my duty to place her above it.'

'I will send for her, and you may ask her,' said her ladyship.

'Aye, that is the best way,' said lord Ossiter, ringing the bell; for from sir George's evident agitation, he imagined there must be something extraordinary about Rebecca, and earnestly wished to see her.

'Tell Rebecca I want her,' said the lady to the servant that entered the room.

'For heaven's sake, lady Ossiter,' said sir George, 'do not shock the poor girl's feelings, by sending for her here.'

'Oh, Lord! she must get the better of those feelings you talk about, or she will never be good for much; besides, it always diverts me to see her blush, and look like a fool.'

'Rebecca Littleton can never look like a fool, madam,' cried sir George, with vehemence, 'and since you persist in sending for her, you will excuse me if I do not stay to see lady Ossiter render herself ridiculous, by insulting a woman every way her superior, but in the paltry distinction of fortune.'

He then left the room, shutting the door after him with violence, and in a few moments Rebecca entered.

How great was the surprise of lord Ossiter when he beheld the strikingly beautiful figure that presented itself to his view! Mod-

esty had recalled to her cheeks the rosy hue which grief had chased from them. Her fine eyes were timidly raised from the floor to her lady's face, while, with a gentle inclination of the body, and a voice of softest harmony, she requested to know her commands.

‘Nothing particular, child; only I was mentioning to my brother the situation I had offered you in my family, and he thinks you are not satisfied with it.’

‘Indeed, madam, I am greatly obliged to sir George for his solicitude, but must request your ladyship to inform him that while I can be so fortunate as to obtain your approbation, I shall never be otherwise than happy, and shall deem myself highly honored by your protection as long as your ladyship shall think fit to extend it towards me.’

‘Perhaps you would like to tell him so yourself, child?’

‘By no means, madam.’

‘But you are quite satisfied, Rebecca?’

‘Entirely so, my lady, and that satisfaction will ever remain uninterrupted, while I am conscious of performing my duty.’

‘Well, that’s all,’ cried her ladyship, in a half peevish accent.

Rebecca courtesied, and retired.

‘Well, and what do you think of her, my

lord?" cried the lady, turning to her husband; 'why you seem in a maze!'

'I am perfectly so, my dear,' (endeavoring to recollect himself;) 'but it is because I can't for my soul conceive what George can see in this girl to make such a fuss about her.'

'Why, don't you think her handsome?'

'No woman appears so in my eyes when your ladyship is by.'

'Oh! you'r vastly civil this morning; but, pray what fault have you to find with her person?'

'Nay, nothing particular; but I think she is altogether insipid.'

'She is very fair.'

'Yes, but I was never struck with your fair women; they have not half the expression of your fine brunettes.'

Lady Ossiter was a very dark woman, and could not help at that moment going to the glass to adjust her handkerchief.

'She has fine eyes, my lord.'

'Fine eyes, oh! ridiculous; you may as well admire the blue glass beads stuck in the head of a wax doll. I don't see any thing about her even tolerably pretty but her neck and shoulders; they seem well enough.'

'This horrid mourning makes one look like a fright,' cried the lady, still looking in the glass. 'and they have made my gown

so abominably high, I declare I appear quite round shouldered; it shall positively be altered before I wear it again.'

'Not if I might advise, my dear; for I declare I never saw you look better than you do this morning; and, in my opinion, women inclined to *en bon point* have more dignity in their persons than the very slender; for instance, now your Rebecca; she will always remind me of Death and Daphne.'

'Dear, my lord, when have I seen you in so agreeable a humor? I declare you are quite witty.'

'How can I be otherwise, my lady, when I have so good a subject for ridicule?'

Her ladyship did not take the keenness of the sarcasm, and retired, to give some orders to her woman, perfectly satisfied that Rebecca was infinitely inferior to herself in personal attractions; while her artful husband applauded himself for the part he had acted, which he naturally imagined would secure, within the reach of his power, a woman, whose charms had made such an impression on his mind, that he was resolved if possible, to sacrifice her a victim to seduction.

When sir George left the parlor, he retired to his own apartment, and calling for pen and ink, addressed the following letter to Rebecca:

'With a heart fully sensible of the merit

of the object I presume to address, how is it possible but I must also be sensible of the fear of offending her? Pardon me, dear young lady, if almost unacquainted with the thousand little delicacies expected by your sex from those of ours, who venture to offer their friendship and assistance to innocence and beauty; pardon me, I say, if my expressions are not sufficiently denotive of my respect and esteem, while I venture to ask if the situation my sister offers you is perfectly consonant with your expectations and wishes; yet I ought to know the modesty, the humility of your mind, will lead you to tell me it is.

‘But, alas! I too well know the disposition of lady Ossiter to imagine a heart like yours, replete with sensibility, can enjoy any tolerable degree of tranquillity, when subject to her caprice and ill-humor: I must therefore entreat my lovely friend to accept, not from me, but as a legacy from my mother (for I am sure she designed it, though the sudden stroke that deprived us of her prevented her putting her designs in execution) the enclosed two thousand pounds, which will, at least, place you above dependance on the weak and unworthy.

‘Permit me also to assure you, dear, amiable Miss Littleton, that, in every future period of my life, I shall be happy to convince you how much I am interested in your wel-

fare, and that nothing would give me more sincere pleasure, than being allowed to devote my life and fortune to the promotion of your felicity.

‘I am, with every token of esteem and respect, your friend,

GEORGE WORTHY.’

Rebecca could not read this letter without emotion; yet did she not hesitate what answer to return; the letter itself she carefully locked up in her cabinet, but the bank bills she sealed up in the following note:

‘Rebecca Littleton returns her most grateful acknowledgments to sir George Worthy for the kind solicitude he evinces for her happiness. She begs leave to return his noble present, which she cannot think of accepting, as it would lay her under an obligation too oppressive to a spirit which sir George is mistaken in thinking humble. Rebecca feels herself highly satisfied in the protection of lady Ossiter, and, though she feels grateful for the offered friendship of the son of her ever lamented benefactress, she must beg leave to decline it, as the vast distance fortune has placed between them renders it impossible to cultivate true friendship, which can only subsist between persons on an equality with each other. Rebecca wishes to be retained in the memory

of sir George only as the servant of his sister, and, at the same time assures him, the son of lady Mary Worthy will ever be retained in her mind with fervent wishes for his happiness.'

When she had sent away this note, she again read over sir George's letter; a tear almost unknown to herself, fell on it as she perused with attention his offers of friendship: but she soon recollected herself, hastily brushed away the token of her weakness, and, returning the letter to her cabinet, began to prepare for her removal to town whither lady Ossiter intended returning the next day.

'What a noble mind is here displayed!' said sir George, as he read Rebecca's note. 'How much does this woman's sentiments elevate her above the station in which Providence has placed her! I fear my letter was not dictated with sufficient delicacy; her pride has taken the alarm, that laudable pride that is a woman's best safeguard: but no matter, I will not write again, but wait till I can discover in what manner my sister behaves to her. When she has tried her new situation, she may not find it so easy as her little knowledge of the world at present leads her to imagine. When she finds herself uncomfortable, then, perhaps, the offer of friendship from me will be more acceptable.'

In the evening sir George having no inclination to join the insipid chat of lord and lady Ossiter, pleaded letters to write, and went into the library to look for a book that would afford him an hour's rational amusement. As he entered the room, he saw Rebecca busily employed in retouching a small drawing that lay before her, and he observed that she frequently looked at a portrait of his mother that hung over the chimney.

‘I disturb you, I fear, Miss Littleton.’

‘By no means, sir,’ said she, rising visibly embarrassed; ‘I was just going. Indeed, my being here is an intrusion, I must entreat you to pardon.’

‘I shall be extremely sorry if Miss Littleton should consider herself an intruder in any apartment in this house. You were drawing, will you permit me to see your performance?’

‘You will smile at my presumption, sir; but I have been endeavoring to catch some faint resemblance of my regretted lady, that should any thing separate me from her daughter's service, I might have it in my power sometimes to gaze on her beloved features and weep.’

‘You have been happy in preserving the likeness; but, I think, I have a miniature of my mother, the most striking thing of the kind I ever saw.’

He then drew from his pocket a small case, which contained lady Mary's picture, elegantly set with brilliants, intermixed with pearls. It had been set as a present for lady Ossiter; but as the lady knew not of her brother's design, he thought he might now dispose of it more to his own satisfaction.

'Will Miss Littleton honor me so far,' said he, taking it from the case, 'as to wear this picture for the sake of her whose resemblance it bears?'

'The picture of itself, sir George, would be to me an invaluable treasure; but its ornaments are so superb and costly, you will pardon me if I decline the acceptance of it.'

'Why will you mortify me by this refusal? You treat me very unkindly, Miss Littleton, since even my mother's picture is not acceptable from my hands!'

'Indeed, sir, you are mistaken, and, to convince you I am not ungrateful, was that picture divested of its rich ornaments, I would accept it cheerfully, and wear it, not only for her sake, but for your own.'

'Charming, engaging woman!' exclaimed he, catching her hand, 'why are you thus irresistibly lovely, and yet refuse me the satisfaction of placing you above the malice of fortune?'

She blushed carnation deep, as she attempted to withdraw her hand; but a smile

dimpled on her cheek, and her heart peeped forth from her tell-tale eyes.

‘You make me smile,’ said she, ‘to hear you talk of the malice of fortune. We, who are born in an humble station, cannot feel the want of luxuries which we never enjoyed. Happiness is not always annexed to wealth, or misery to poverty. We are all poor or rich by comparison, and my situation, which is to you an object of compassion, would be to thousands the summit of felicity; but your condescension makes me forget myself: I wish you a good night.’

‘Stay one moment, adorable Rebecca!’ cried sir George, stopping her as she was about to leave the room. ‘Hear me, I entreat you, with attention; by heavens, you shall not go into the service of lady Ossiter, nor into any service. I am your slave; my life, my fortune, all are yours. I love you more than existence itself. I mean not to offend your delicacy. My designs are of the most honorable nature. Name your own time, I will wait with patience. Only suffer me to tell my sister, that the woman whom I aspire to the honor of making my wife, must henceforth be treated with that respect her worth and virtue demands.’

‘Hold, hold, dear sir George,’ cried she, pale and trembling, ‘I must hear no more. You honor me, highly honor me by these professions of regard: but you talk of im-

possibilities. The humble Rebecca Littleton, however sensible of your merits, can never be your wife; insurmountable obstacles are placed between us.'

'If your bosom, lovely Rebecca, glows with sensibility, every obstacle is easily removed.'

'Do not interrupt me,' said she. The obstacles I speak of can never be removed; my vows are already pledged; they are registered in heaven; 'tis sacrilege to listen to your declaration.'

Sir George dropped her hand, and, with a look of mingled horror and surprise, cried, 'Are you already married?'

'No,' replied she faintly, 'not married.'

'Then you sport with my misery, cruel, cruel girl!'

'Alas!' said she, with a look of tenderness, 'heaven knows I do not. I would give worlds, did I possess them, to save you from one hour's anguish; but, ah! sir George, mine is a wayward fate: my bosom is heavy laden with sorrow. Ah! do not increase that sorrow by letting me see you partake it.'

'Then,' cried he, starting from his seat, 'then you do not hate me?'

'Hate you, oh! no, that were impossible.'

'Then we may yet be happy,' said he, catching her in his arms.

Rebecca's heart had almost betrayed her; but she was sensible this must be the mo-

ment of victory. She pushed him from her, and assuming an air of reserve, 'Sir George,' said she, 'if you wish my happiness there is but one way by which you can promote it, that is, by never more speaking to me on this subject; my fate is irrevocably fixed; cease then to disturb my felicity by endeavoring to awaken my sensibility. You, sir George, are designed by heaven to move in an exalted station. You have many duties to fulfil, which it will be almost criminal to neglect. For me, unknowing and unknown by the world, if I can but pass through life blameless, my utmost wish is gratified.'

'Will you then leave me,' said he, 'and leave me devoid of hope?'

'No, sir, I will endeavor to cheer your bosom with the same hope that animates mine. I hope, sincerely, you will soon meet a woman your equal in birth, fortune, and merit, who will obliterate from your mind all traces of Rebecca; and may you, united by the most sacred ties, enjoy in her society every blessing that heaven can bestow, or you desire.'

'No, Rebecca, no; do not indulge so vain an idea, for while you live, and remain unmarried, never shall the hymeneal torch be lighted by me.'

'Ah!' cried she, forcing a smile, 'you talk wildly; we shall hear you tell a different tale shortly.'

‘But will you not accept the picture as a token of my esteem?’

He held it towards her. She put his hand back, and said, in a tone of displeasure, ‘I can accept no diamonds, sir George, and, for heaven’s sake, detain me no longer here. I have acted very improperly in talking with you so long; but I will take care this shall be our last interview.’

She then courtesied slightly, and retired to her apartment, where conscious rectitude alone alleviated the pangs of disappointed love.

‘Yes,’ said she, ‘I have done right; an union with sir George would by no means insure me permanent felicity; he is young, volatile, and possessed of violent passions. Alas! when the novelty of my person was worn off, I might cease to charm, and how could I endure his neglect? Besides, how ill could my heart bear that he should be subject to the sneers of his acquaintance on my account. Oh! my dear lady Mary, you knew what was best for me, and never will I forget your injunctions.’

CHAPTER VI.

‘AND pray what do you think of my lady?’ said Mrs Lappet to Rebecca, the evening of her arrival in Bedford-Square.

Lappet was an experienced abigail. She had lived with lady Ossiter from the time of her marriage, and could not, without envy, behold Rebecca introduced into the family, as she feared she might have a gown or two less in the year, or, perhaps, Rebecca might supplant her entirely. This jealousy made her resolve to cultivate an intimacy with the unsuspecting girl, and be the most forward in showing her civilities, that she might win her confidence, and obtain her real opinion concerning her lady, and then betray her. Lappet, when she had any favorite point to gain, could assume a most insinuating manner. The words that fell from her tongue were smooth and pleasant as the river’s surface unruffled by a breeze: but like that, when the whirlwind of passion arose, displayed the most frightful contrast.

‘And what do you think of my lady?’ said she, as she was taking her tea in Rebecca’s apartment.

‘I hardly know what to think yet,’ replied Rebecca. ‘I never judge very hastily. She appears extremely good natured.’

‘Ah! my dear, you will know her better

by and by; there is a deal of difference between old servants and new ones.'

'I should be much obliged to you, Mrs Lappet, to give me some little idea of the best method to obtain her approbation.'

'Indeed, that is more than is in my power, child, for what pleases to day may displease tomorrow: I never give myself much trouble about it. How do you like the children?'

'They are very fine boys; but I am most pleased with Miss Ossiter; she seems extremely mild and engaging.'

'Well, you are the first person I ever heard say they liked her best. My lady can't bear her; she says she is so stupid—'

'I think it is very wrong,' said Rebecca, in the simplicity of her heart, 'for mothers to make any distinction in their regard for their children; and I shall consider myself doubly obliged to be kind and affectionate to Miss, if her mamma is unkind to her.'

'It shows the goodness of your heart, my dear ma'am,' said Lappet, beginning to see a little into the disposition of our heroine.

'But, pray, have you seen my lord yet?'

'Yes, once at Twickenham.'

'Well, don't you think him a vast handsome man?'

'He is well enough,' said she, carelessly; 'but sir George Worthy is, in my opinion, a great deal handsomer.'

'Lord Ossiter is a man of gallantry, tho',

I assure you, I must tell you, but it is between ourselves, he once made proposals to me.'

'Indeed! Well, I think you were right to refuse him; disproportionate marriages are seldom happy.'

'Oh! Lord, my dear, it was not for marriage, I assure you; it was since I lived with my lady.'

'Good heaven!' cried Rebecca, with a look of surprise, 'what since he has been married?'

'Yes, but I would not have you mention it, he offered me three hundred a year.'

'And how could you remain in the family after such an affront, Mrs Lappet?'

'Why, I thought it was a pity to lose my place, so I kept my gentleman at a proper distance, and he dropped the pursuit: but come, ma'am, let us hurry the nursery maid to put Miss and the young gentlemen to bed, and then we will go down and take a game at cards in the housekeeper's room.'

'You will excuse me, Mrs Lappet: I never played a game at cards in my life; besides, my lady has given me some muslin to spot, and I must set about it.'

'Lord! child, you'll have enough to do if you humor her by working of an evening.'

'It is my duty to do all that is in my power, and I had rather work than sit still.'

'Well, then, bring down your work, you

will be moped to death sitting here by yourself.'

'Oh! dear, no, I shall not: I am never lonely. I work very fast, and when I have done a good bit I can take up a book and read. I had rather not go down if you will excuse me.'

'Just as you please, ma'am,' said Lappet. 'We shall be glad of your company, but if you prefer being alone—'

She courtesied ironically, tossed her head, and left Rebecca to the enjoyment of her own reflections, while she entertained her fellow-servants with the pride, conceit, and ignorance of the new-comer. 'I tried to get her down amongst us that we might have a little fun with her,' said she, 'for you would laugh to hear how foolishly she talks. She will not stay here long, take my word for it.'

At least, Mrs Lappet had resolved in her own mind, to use every exertion to displace her from a family where, she was fearful, her beauty, innocence and worth, would attract the notice of one, whose devoirs she considered as entirely due to herself.

For, to own the truth, Mrs Lappet had not been quite so deaf to the proposals of her lord, as she had represented to Rebecca, though she had rather made a mistake in saying his lordship offered a settlement, that being a measure earnestly desired by herself, but which she could find no means to

bring lord Ossiter into ; indeed he had found her too easy a conquest to indulge a thought of putting himself to much expense or trouble on her account.

The next morning when lady Ossiter had breakfasted, she went immediately to the nursery, a thing she had not been know to do for many months before ; but Rebecca was a novelty, and therefore demanded from her lady some little attention : as Rebecca had been told that her lady seldom, if ever, came into the children's apartment, the visit was entirely unexpected, and lady Ossiter found her busily employed in arranging some pencils and crayons in a small, but elegant, drawing-box, which had been given her by her late benefactress.

She arose, and apologized for the confusion her drawings, &c. which had fallen on the floor, had made in the apartment ; 'Had I been aware your ladyship intended this honor—,'

'Oh ! never mind, child,' cried the lady, with a look of infinite good humor, which no woman knew better how to assume than lady Ossiter ; 'I did not come to disturb you, but I thought I should like you to hear the children read.'

'Have they ever been taught their letters, madam ?'

'Why, upon my word, I cannot tell ; I believe Charles can tell them when he sees

them : I have tried him sometimes by taking up the newspaper when he was in the room ; but do not believe Lucy or James know any thing about it ; but call them in, and let us see what they can do.'

Rebecca, who had about two hours before seen them all neatly dressed, and given them their breakfast, opened the adjoining room to call them, when how great was her surprise when she saw the eldest boy, who was eight years old, with two or three color shells before him, several brushes and a basin of water, with which he had not been satisfied to daub several sheets of paper, and his own clothes, but also his brother and sister's hands, faces and frocks ! Infinitely chagrined that they should be seen by their mother in such a condition, she turned mildly towards the nursery-maid, and asked ' how she could be so neglectful as not to mind what the children were doing ?'

' Mind them yourself, ma'am,' was the answer : ' I thought you came to help me, not to command me.'

' I shall for the future mind them,' said she, attempting to take the brushes from Master Ossiter.

' You shall not have them,' screamed he : ' I will paint when I please ; mamma says I shall.'

Rebecca persisted in removing from his reach the shells and water, when setting up

a scream like a Bedlamite, he threw one, which he had retained in his hand, full in her face.

‘What is the matter?’ cried lady Ossiter, opening the door. ‘Come hither, Charles; what do they do to you, my love?’

‘She will not let me play. She has taken away my paints, and will not let me do any thing.’

‘But she shall let you do as you please,’ said the mother, kissing him, ‘so do not cry.’

At that moment another scream, from the inner apartment, vibrated into her ladyship’s ears, and Master James, and Miss Ossiter came bellowing into the room, ‘that the new maid would wash their faces.’

‘Heaven save me,’ said the lady, ‘from often visiting the nursery! You are enough to drive one mad. I had hoped, indeed, that you, Rebecca, would have managed them better than to have had all this uproar; but I see servants are all alike; they have no more notion about the management of children than natural fools: why, I will answer for it, if I had time, I could make these children do just as I please, without any of this roaring. Do you not think, Charles, you would always mind me?’

‘Oh! yes, mamma; you never contradict me, but give me every thing I want.’

‘Well, go, my dear, go to Rebecca and have your face washed, and you shall go out

in the coach, and buy some more paints.— Do, child, put James and Miss Ossiter on clean frocks, and get yourself ready to go out with them. I will hear them read another time; poor dears, they have been vexed enough this morning:’ then taking her favorite’s hand, to lead him out of the room, she stooped, and picked up two or three of Rebecca’s drawings. ‘Here, my love,’ said she ‘ask your maid to give you these pretty pictures.’

Rebecca was too meek to contradict, and he marched off with her two best performances in his hand.

In about ten minutes a footman tapped at the door, to inform her that the chariot waited, and that she must go to her lady’s dressing-room for Master Ossiter.

Rebecca, who had been accustomed to peace and regularity, was distracted by the hurry and confusion she had been thrown into; but flattering herself it would be better next day, she made all the haste she could, and repaired to the dressing-room, where, on a sofa, beside his mamma, sat Master Ossiter, with a pair of gold bowed scissars, cutting the houses, trees, and figures from her drawings, which her ladyship was amusing herself by placing in a kind of fantastic medley on the table before her.

‘See, Rebecca,’ cried she, ‘we have dis-

patched those pretty pictures, I dare say, a deal quicker than you made them.'

Rebecca smiled faintly; but she felt a cold chill strike to her heart. 'Alas! lady Mary would not have done so,' sighed she, softly, as she followed the children down stairs, and a tear started in her eye, which she was unable to suppress.

'Drive to the toy-shop,' said Master Ossiter, as the man shut the chariot-door, 'and see what mamma has given me,' continued he, pulling half a guinea from his pocket, and showing it to his brother and sister; 'and I am to lay it out just as I please.'

As the chariot stopped at the shop door, a poor man, pale, and emaciated, with but one leg, took off his hat, bowed, but did not speak.

'Look at that poor man, my dear,' said Rebecca; 'he would be thankful for a small part of your money; suppose you were to give him a shilling.'

'What should I give him a shilling for?' said the child.

'Because he is in great distress; see how pale he looks, and what a thin ragged coat he has on this cold day!'

'Well, what is that to me?'

'Suppose, Master Ossiter, you were cold and hungry?'

'That you know is impossible.'

'Impossible! sir.'

‘Yes, to be sure ; a’nt I a lord’s son, and shall not I be a lord myself, if I live long enough ? and you know lords are never poor.’

‘Then it is more their duty to relieve those that are.’

‘Duty !’ said he, staring in her face ; ‘mamma never gives any thing to poor folks ; she says they should be all sent to prison, and made to work.’

This dialogue had passed in the shop, and the miserable object of it was still at the door. Miss Ossiter put her little hand instinctively into her pocket.

‘If I had any money ! but mamma don’t very often give me any.’ Then approaching Rebecca, in a kind of half whisper, ‘if you, ma’am, will give the poor man half a crown, I will ask my uncle for one to pay you with the first time I see him.’

Rebecca gazed on the child as she was speaking, and she fancied she beheld her grandmother’s benevolence play about her infant countenance. She caught her in her arms, gave her the desired half crown, and joy for a moment animated her bosom, when she beheld both the beggar and his little benefactress look equally happy.

A few days after this, lady Ossiter sent for Rebecca in haste, to her dressing-room. ‘You seem to have some taste for drawing, child,’ said she, ‘pray can you paint flowers?’

‘A little, madam.’

‘Well, now I want you to do something for me; I last night saw the most beautiful painted trimming, and I’ll take you to a shop this morning where you shall see some like it; if you think you can do it I shall be vastly pleased, for there is a ball next week.’

‘But your ladyship is in mourning,’ said she, blushing for her lady’s folly.

‘Oh, la! well, I protest I forgot that, but now, I dare say you could fancy me something pretty in black and white; do try, child: I shall change my mourning in about a month, and I think you can do it in that time.’

‘If I knew what would please your ladyship.’

‘Do it according to your own taste and I am sure it will be pretty.’

The good natured Rebecca was willing to please to the utmost of her power, but, alas! that power was far from adequate to the many tasks imposed upon her. Mrs Lappet was a great favorite, therefore often asked leave to go out, and then Rebecca was summoned to attend the toilette of her lady, and indeed her taste and judgment in the arrangement of female ornaments was so elegant, that lady Ossiter never appeared to greater advantage than when dressed by her hands.

Then was a morning cap to be made, or

a dress fresh trimmed, they were all brought to Rebecca; and did her ladyship ever ask for any thing that was not ready, the answer was, indeed, my lady, I gave it to Rebecca, two or three days ago, but she is such a fine lady, and spends so much time at her book and her music.

In the mean time our fair heroine was sacrificing her health to the vain hope of obtaining the approbation of her lady, she had not a moment for the most trifling relaxation; but obliged to rise early on account of the children, for the nursery-maid imposed upon her good nature, and left her entirely to dress and undress them. Mrs Lappet would, if in the least indisposed, retire to rest, and leave Rebecca to sit up for her lady, who, addicted to the fashionable vice of gaming, was often from home till four, five, nay, sometimes six o'clock in the morning; and when she had ill luck, would return in the most diabolical humor, and vent that spleen which politeness obliged her to conceal in company, on her meek unoffending attendant; indeed to such a height did she suffer her passion to rise, that Rebecca, on hearing the knocker announce her arrival, would fall into such a fit of trembling, that she was scarcely able to stand while she undressed her.

But the reader must not suppose that, during this period, either sir George or lord

Ossiter had forgotten her; the former had written her several letters, which she returned unopened; for, said she, conscious as I am of my own weakness, why should I wilfully expose it to trials it may not be able to withstand. At length, wearied out with her inflexible resolution, he determined to take a trip to the continent, and endeavor to banish her from his thoughts; but before he went he determined to put it in her power to leave his sister whenever her situation became painful, without being obliged to have recourse to servitude again. And Mrs Harley was the person he determined to employ on this occasion.

Lord Ossiter had made frequent attempts to see and converse with Rebecca, but she was so much in the apartment with the children, or in her lady's dressing-room, with Lappet, that he found it more difficult than he at first imagined, and he was too cautious in his affairs of gallantry to use pen and paper.

One morning, as she was intently engaged in completing the trimming we have mentioned, Mrs Harley unexpectedly entered the room.

A faint gleam of pleasure animated the countenance, and beamed from the eyes of Rebecca, as she arose to receive this faithful servant of lady Mary.

‘Mrs Harley,’ said she, taking her cordi-

ally by the hand, 'to what am I to attribute this unexpected pleasure?'

Struck with her pallid cheeks and altered air, Harley first brushed off a starting tear, and then disclosed her errand.

'I come, my dear Miss, from my good young master—'

'If to bring me a letter,' said she, interrupting her, 'I must beg you to excuse me—'

'My dear child,' said Harley, 'don't fly out in this manner, but listen to me attentively; I have children of my own, Miss Littleton, and heaven forbid I should ever advise a young creature to a wrong step! Trust me, I am actuated only by friendship when I entreat you to inform me what motives you have for thus obstinately refusing the offers of a man of rank and fortune, who loves you honorably and sincerely?'

'Do not ask me, my dear Harley; do not let us talk on this subject.'

'We will talk on no other then, for sure I am there must be some powerful reason for your conduct. Is your heart otherwise engaged? Does want of fortune prevent your happiness?'

'Ah, no! no! my friend,' cried she, her head falling on Harley's shoulder, and her eyes filling with tears; 'I am unhappy because I am not insensible.'

'You talk in riddles, my dear; if you are not insensible——'

‘Oh, stop! stop! you must say no more, unless you mean to break my heart; for, alas! Harley, the last time I saw my dear departed lady Mary, I promised her, solemnly promised her, by every hope of felicity, never to listen to any overture of love from sir George; and never, no never while I retain the least remembrance of what is past, will I break a vow so solemnly given.’

‘This family pride,’ said Harley, ‘was the only foible my lady had.’

‘She had no foible,’ said Rebecca, ‘it was a wish to insure my felicity alone, prompted the request.’

‘Whatever was her motive, my dear Miss, promises when once made should be inviolably observed; I will, therefore, say no more to you on the subject: sir George, since satisfied you will not accept his offers, is resolved next Monday to leave England.’

Rebecca turned pale and Harley continued.

‘He means to spend the winter on the continent, but has desired you will accept his mother’s picture, which he has had fresh set for you, and this trifle,’ laying a bank note for five hundred pounds on the table. ‘Now I will have no qualms and squeamish nonsense, Miss Littleton; I am certain my lady meant to provide for you—more shame for some folks that they forgot her last commands; but we cannot always make people

do as they ought. - Now, you must take this money, and consider it as her bequest. I am sure you will find it necessary very soon to quit this family; your dear pale cheeks and heavy eyes tell me you should at this moment be in your bed, rather than at work.' She then drew out the picture, which was only set in plain gold.

Rebecca took it, pressed it to her lips, and tying the riband that was fixed to it round her neck, placed it as a sacred deposit in her bosom. She also took the bank note and put it in her pocket-book, but secretly resolved that nothing but the severest necessity should tempt her to break into it.

When Monday arrived, Rebecca could not avoid approaching the window at the sound of every carriage that drew up to the door.

'He will not surely leave England,' said she, 'without taking leave of his sister.'

About two o'clock she saw his chariot draw up to the door, and half concealing herself behind the window shutter, gazed on him, and breathed a prayer for his felicity, as she saw him alight. In about half an hour she was desired to bring Master James and Miss Ossiter into the drawing-room. She took them to the door, opened it and put them in, but her feelings were too powerful to permit her to enter.

'Ah! uncle,' said Miss Ossiter, 'I am glad

you are come, I have been waiting for you this long, long time.'

'Well, my dear Lucy,' said he, fondly taking her on his knee, 'and what might make you wish to see me so much?'

'Because I love you dearly,' said she throwing her little arms round his neck, 'but that an't all.'

'No! what else was it then?'

She lowered her voice, and, clapping her mouth close to his ear, said, 'I owe my maid half a crown, and I told her you would pay her.'

Sir George was surprised. 'And pray how does that happen?' said he.

'Rebecca lent it me,' said she, still lowering her voice, 'to give to a poor man.'

'What Rebecca?' said sir George, astonished.'

'Why, Rebecca,' replied the child; 'my own maid, that teaches me to read, and say my prayers, and tells me if I am good I shall go to heaven.'

'What stuff is the child talking?' said lady Ossiter, catching the last word.

Sir George was too strongly affected to speak; he put a couple of guineas into Lucy's hand, and hastily kissing them all, hurried out of the house; as he seated himself in the chaise, he cast his eyes towards the upper windows. Rebecca caught the glance;

the impulse was irresistible; she threw up the sash.

Sir George kissed his hand, while his countenance betrayed the feelings of his soul.

Rebecca laid hers on her heart, then lifted them towards heaven, as if she would have said, 'God bless you!'

'Drive on,' said sir George, and again bowing his head to hide his emotions from the servants, a moment conveyed him from her sight.

CHAPTER VII.

'I do not think, my dear,' said lord Ossiter, as he was taking his chocolate in his lady's dressing-room, one morning, about a fortnight after sir George's departure, 'I do not think it will be in my power to join the intended party at lady Ricket's tonight.'

'Some new engagement, my lord,' said her ladyship, smiling affectedly.

'Not a very agreeable one,' he replied.—'I am obliged to go into the city, on some infernal business with my banker: these monied men are the most tiresome animals in the creation. He says I have over-drawn him, and desires I will come and examine my accounts; it is a cursed stupid affair, and

I don't often concern myself about such things, but the fellow is so pressing.'

'But perhaps you can get away in time to dress and join us, my lord, before supper.'

'I will if possible, but I dare say the wretch will make me as stupid as himself before I have done with his discounts and interests, so I shall be horrid bad company; therefore it is most likely I shall come home and go to bed.'

'To bed! my lord,' cried her ladyship, laughing; 'why sure you are going to take pattern by the sober cit.'

Though lady Ossiter pretended to desire her lord's company, it was, in fact, the furthest thing from her wishes. She had for some time past been admired and followed by the duke of —— a conquest so brilliant and unexpected, was the highest gratification of this vain woman, and she heard with pleasure her husband's intended appointment in the city, as she was resolved to see his grace for half an hour at home, previous to their meeting at lady Ricket's ball, where she was engaged to dance with him.

But lord Ossiter had frequently given her a few pretty plain hints in regard to her conduct with her noble admirer, and therefore, though she had resolved to see him, she thought it would be best to do it privately, and Lappet being unfortunately gone to visit a sick brother in the country, she was

obliged to make Rebecca her confidant on this occasion, and immediately on retiring from breakfast, she summoned her to her dressing-room.

‘Rebecca, child,’ said she, as she entered, ‘I think I have not given you any thing since you have been with me, and you have done more than half of Lappet’s business for her; there is that blue satin gown and coat, you may take them, and as they are rather soiled, here is something to pay for dying and making up:’ presenting her with a couple of guineas. ‘Do you know, child,’ continued she, ‘I have taken the strangest whim into my head, and you must lend me your assistance—I think that trimming you made me extremely pretty, I dare say it will be greatly admired.’

‘I am happy it pleases you, madam,’ said she; ‘but I thought you were saying you would have it altered.’

‘Oh, no, I was not speaking of my dress then, I think nothing can be more elegant or better fancied, but you have a charming taste, that is certain. No, I was going to tell you of a strange whim I had taken to play a trick with the old duke of —; for, do you know, the man makes downright love to me whenever he meets me, and the other day, when he was here, he left behind him these superb bracelets. Now, I have a mind to mortify him, and as my lord is going into

the city, I will send for the duke to come here that I may have an opportunity of returning his present, and laugh at him.'

'Would it not be better to return them to him,' said she, 'without seeing him?'

'Oh, no, that will not do half so well, for I shall have the satisfaction of seeing his chagrin; so Rebecca, you shall take a note, which I will write, and send it, unknown to the other servants, and when his grace comes he shall come disguised, and pass for your brother, and you can bring him to my dressing-room.'

'Your ladyship will pardon me,' said she, laying the two guineas on the table, 'I am not fit to engage in such a service; I would much rather decline it.'

'Decline it!' said her ladyship, reddening; 'pray are you not my servant?'

'Undoubtedly, madam.'

'And is it not your duty to obey my orders?'

'When they are proper.'

'And pray are you to be judge of what is proper or improper in my actions?'

'By no means; but your ladyship will allow me to judge of my own.'

'Oh, certainly, madam, if you are too squeamish to enter into so innocent a plan.'

'I make no doubt but your designs, madam, are perfectly innocent, but where there

is mystery there is always room for suspicion, and should my lord discover it—'

'But how can he, child, if you are discreet?'

'I am determined to be so, madam, and hope you will pardon my temerity, if I humbly entreat you to drop this design.'

'Prithee, good madam pert,' said her ladyship, scornfully, 'do not pretend to more delicacy and virtue than your betters. I have as high a regard for my honor as any woman can have, but I may indulge myself, I hope, in a little innocent gallantry for all that. Go; I shall not want you till I dress.'

She retired, and for this once the pain her lady's anger gave her was more than counterbalanced by the reflection that she had acted right in rejecting the infamous service she would have employed her in.

Contrary to her lady's expectation, Rebecca had scarcely entered her own apartment, when Lappet returned, and entered the dressing-room, to receive lady Ossiter's commands.

'Well, Lappet,' said she, 'you have returned in very good time, for I have been so grossly affronted by that little prude, Rebecca, that I can hardly retain my anger; do you know the impertinent creature had the audacity to refuse having a note conveyed from me to the duke of —, though I had condescended to inform her that my in-

tentions were only to laugh at him. You know, Lappet, there is not a woman breathing would be more cautious than myself in doing any thing improper.'

'Dear, my lady, I am sure of that; nor is your ladyship, by any means, obliged to enter into explanations with your servants; to speak your commands, is sufficient to have them instantly obeyed.'

The obsequious abigail took the note, conveyed it herself, and at eight o'clock in the evening his grace was admitted to her lady's dressing-room.

Lady Ossiter meant nothing less than to overstep the boundaries of discretion in this *tele-a-tete*. The duke was to her an object of disgust, but flattery was delightful to her ears, and pearls and diamonds were pretty ornaments in her opinion, easily purchased by a little condescension; and she flattered herself that while she remained virtuous in one great point, she might indulge herself in every other imprudence, and defy the censures of the world.

But it was the opinion of Rebecca, that every truly virtuous woman should carefully avoid even the appearance of indiscretion, especially those whose elevated stations might render their examples infinitely pernicious to their inferiors: she therefore felt herself greatly hurt by lady Ossiter's want of prudence, and flattered herself the

repulse she had met from her would prevent her making her designs known to any other servant, and she readily imagined Mrs Lappet would be as unwilling as herself to engage in the business; so when informed she had returned, Rebecca found herself somewhat relieved, as she knew she should avoid the painful task of dressing a woman whom she feared would be predetermined not to be pleased with her utmost exertion.

While the duke and her ladyship were together, the artful Lappet thought she would just step in and hear what Rebecca had to say on the subject, for, by her specious appearance of friendship, she had so won on the unsuspecting heart of our heroine, that she never scrupled to communicate to her every thought as it arose, except those that concerned sir George, and those she endeavored to conceal, if possible, even from herself.

‘So,’ cried Lappet, sitting down, ‘my lady and you had a tiff today, I find.’

‘We did not quite agree,’ said Rebecca, slightly, ‘but I dare say she has forgotten it by this time; I am sure I do not wish to remember it.’

‘I suppose she wanted to get a letter conveyed to the duke.’

‘What then she has told you herself has she?’

‘Oh, yes, the moment I came in. I declare

it is a pity my lord is not acquainted with her conduct.'

'It would be a cruel thing, Mrs Lappet, to plant dissension between man and wife; besides, I dare say my lady, though imprudent is not criminal.'

'To be sure my lady has some excuse; my lord is always after other women; he is seldom at home, and I am certain don't care a pin about his wife.'

'Perhaps if her ladyship was more attentive to increase his domestic comforts, he would necessarily grow more attached to home, but while she is so extravagantly fond of dissipation, and while the four honors have the power to keep her from home, night after night, can we be surprised if her husband seeks abroad for that felicity he is sure of not meeting in his own house?'

'Why, to say truth, my lady is a sad rake.'

'And her children, Mrs Lappet, she pays but little attention to them, nor will she suffer any other person to do it. Can there be a more lovely or engaging child than Miss Ossiter. I am sure the little time I have to instruct her is amply repaid by her docility and attention; as to Master Ossiter and his brother James, they are so humored, especially the former, that it requires greater powers than I am possessed of to make them attend to any thing.'

'He is very passionate,' said Lappet.

‘Extremely so,’ replied the artless Rebecca; ‘besides which he is cruel, mischievous, and a great liar, and these things should be corrected in time, or he will be as despicable when a man, as he is now disagreeable as a child.’

‘His temper is very much like his mother’s.’

‘I think there is some similitude between them, for indeed Mrs Lappet, I do not know how you acquire fortitude to support it, but my lady is sometimes so passionate and capricious I am ready to die with vexation, and, though my heart be ready to burst, in her presence I dare not shed a tear, for if sometimes, when I can no longer suppress them, they will burst forth, she reproaches me with childishness, passion, and folly. Folly it is, I will own, to let the behavior of so unfeeling a woman wound my sensibility; but yet when I know that I do my duty to the utmost of my power, it is very hard to meet nothing in return but taunts and unkindness.’

‘So it is indeed, my dear, but you must keep up your spirits.’

‘I do, Mrs Lappet, as well as I can, but my lady sometimes asks me what I am fit for, and if she had not taken me who would. That my lord often tells her he wonders, she will keep so awkward a creature about her. I am sensible I have many obligations

to her ladyship's family, but can I help my inexperience, unacquainted as I am with servitude?"

'No, to be sure you cannot; but my lady will want me, and I shall come in for my share, for I do assure you, child, we get it all round in turn; but you will know how to bear these things better in time.'

'Lappet returned to her lady, and not only repeated but exaggerated every thing which Rebecca, in the simplicity of her heart, had uttered.

'Ungrateful creature!' said the lady, 'after what I have done for her.'

'Ungrateful indeed, madam, I really wonder your ladyship will keep her.'

'I shall not keep her long, Lappet; I assure you I am quite sick of her airs and impertinence.'

The clock had struck ten, the children were in bed, and lady Ossiter just stepped into her chariot and drove towards Cavendish-Square, the servants retired to the lower apartments, and silence seemed to reign in the house. Rebecca wearied with the fatigue and vexation of the day, thought she might, this evening, safely indulge in a relaxation which she had not enjoyed since her residence in lady Ossiter's family, which was to practise a few hours on the harpsichord. She took her music books and candle, and went to a small parlor in a retired

part of the house, where stood a fine toned instrument, and where she sat down and amused herself, unthinking how time passed, and entirely inattentive to the footsteps that passed and repassed the door of the apartment. The music soothed and composed the perturbation of her spirits. She played several little plaintive airs, and accompanied them with her voice; and among the rest, the song she was singing when sir George first saw her. When she had got nearly through it, the remembrance of that scene—the striking contrast of her situation then and now, struck so forcibly on her imagination that she was unable to proceed. She paused, and tears involuntarily stole down her cheeks; her amusement was ended; she rose from her seat, and was shutting the book, when somebody clasped her rudely in his arms and snatched a kiss.

Rebecca, too much terrified to scream; could only endeavor to disengage herself, and turning round beheld lord Ossiter.

‘If I have alarmed you, my dear creature, I humbly entreat your pardon. But do not let me interrupt your amusement; come, sit down again, and let me hear that charming song you were singing when I entered the room.’

‘Your lordship will pardon me, I had no intention of being heard by any one;—I have some orders to execute for my lady.’

‘Nay, nay you do not get off so easily. Do you know my lovely girl, I have been absolutely expiring from the first moment I beheld you, for an opportunity to tell you how much I admire and adore you?’

‘Surely your lordship cannot seriously mean to insult me.’

‘Insult you, my angel! no, by heavens I would sacrifice the wretch who should dare offend you. No, my dear girl, I mean to offer you love and affluence in the room of dependance and poverty. I will place you in your proper sphere; such beauty and elegance were not formed for servitude.—Come, listen to me, I will furnish you a house, keep you a chariot, and settle five hundred a year.’

‘Gracious heaven!’ cried Rebecca, bursting into tears, ‘to what am I exposed.’

‘Pshaw, pshaw, this is all prudery and nonsense; come, dry your tears and let us go to my jeweller’s, and you shall take your choice of whatever trinkets his shop affords, I will not limit you as to the sum.’

Lord Ossiter had but an indifferent opinion of female delicacy; he thought the word virtue very pretty in the mouth of a pretty woman, but as to the reality existing in the heart, he thought no woman possessed so large a share, but that money, jewels, and flattery could lull it to sleep: how astonished was he then to find, upon taking a few

liberties with Rebecca, that she shrunk instinctively from him, shrieked faintly, and staggering a few paces towards the door, fell lifeless on the floor.

Terrified, he caught her from the ground, and ringing the bell with violence, began to tear open her gown and handkerchief, in order to give her air: 'my dear, my lovely girl,' said he, 'for heaven's sake revive.'—Then placing her on a sofa, he seated himself beside her, and rested her head on his shoulder.

At that moment who should appear at the door but Mrs Lappet, all the fury of a jealous enraged woman flashing from her eyes.

'My dear Lappet,' said his lordship, 'I happened to come unexpectedly into the room where this poor girl was amusing herself, and see how it has affrighted her; do get a little water.'

But Lappet was not to be deceived; she had heard him utter words of tenderness, and was sufficiently convinced Rebecca was her rival.

'The creature is so affected,' said she, 'I declare there is no bearing her, but I assure your lordship I have something else to do than to wait on the *dear lovely girl*.'

Rebecca was now recovering, and raising her head, she caught hold of Lappet's gown, as she turned to leave the room, and ex-

claimed, 'do not leave me; stay, save me; take me from this place.'

'Indeed, ma'am, I am in a hurry,' cried Lappet, twitching her gown from the feeble grasp of Rebecca, and flung out of the room, audibly saying, 'her lady should be informed what sort of a person she had in her family.'

Rebecca arose, disengaged herself from his lordship's arms, who no longer attempted to detain her, and with trembling steps returned to her apartment.

'So, ma'am,' cried Lappet, as she was assisting her lady to rise next morning, 'so, ma'am, though Miss Rebecca was so delicate as to refuse conveying a letter to his grace, she has no objection to private interviews with my lord. Oh, I could have torn the creature's eyes out, an impertinent minx.'

'What are you talking of, Lappet?' said her ladyship, with the greatest composure, 'I protest you seem out of your senses.'

'I am, my lady, almost; for when I reflect on so kind, so good a lady as yourself being treated in such a barbarous manner: why, ma'am, after you were gone out last night, I went up to see if Rebecca was doing the dress your ladyship said you would wear on Thursday, and I could not find her; however, as I knew she sometimes went to the library when you were not at home, and staid and read for two or three hours, I sat

down and began a little of it myself, but, after working till past twelve o'clock, I thought it was very odd where she could be, so I went down the back stairs, thinking perhaps I should find her in the housekeeper's room, but as I passed the little music parlor, I heard the sound of voices, and opening the door, what does your ladyship think I discovered? I thought I should have swooned away, for there sat Rebecca, fast locked in my lord's arms, and her head leaning on his shoulder.'

'Very well,' cried lady Ossiter, peevishly, the crimson of resentment rushing over her face and neck, 'why am I plagued with this long story; one would think you were jealous of the creature, by the passion you are in.'

'I jealous, my lady, does your ladyship think—'

'Oh, no! I don't think about it; I suppose my lord is not worse than other men of his rank; and while he is not wanting in respect to me, I shall not trouble myself about his amusements; to be sure, it is rather mortifying to have a little insignificant hussy preferred in one's own house.'

'That is what I say, ma'am.'

'You have no right to say or think about it; if I am satisfied with my lord's conduct, I desire I may hear none of your flippant impertinence upon a subject that don't concern you.'

‘I have done, ma’am, but I hope you will discharge—’

‘I certainly shall discharge every servant of mine, whose conduct displeases me; therefore, Lappet, read that impudent scrawl, and then let me know what wages are due to you.’

‘Lappet took the letter, and trembled as she took it, for she knew it to be one which she had written to her sister, and having intrusted it to the house-maid to put in the post, the girl’s curiosity led her to open it, but, being surprised by the entrance of her lady whilst in the act of reading it, she had, in her hurry to put it in her pocket, dropped it, and while the officious Lappet was contriving to introduce the duke unperceived to her lady, this unfortunate letter discovered her criminal intercourse with her lord. But though lady Ossiter had thus bridled her passion while talking to her infamous confidant, she no sooner saw the innocent Rebecca, than she vented on her that torrent of abuse fear had prevented her pouring on the other.

Artful infamous creature, were her elegant expressions, to pretend to such refinement of sentiment, and yet be guilty of such glaring faults.

In vain Rebecca wept, and called on heaven to witness her innocence; even when kneeling, she requested not to be bereaved

of her only refuge an unblemished character. The haughty lady Ossiter spurned her from her, and bid her instantly leave her house, and get her bread without, for she was well convinced she did not deserve one.

Lord Ossiter, prepared as he was to meet the anger of his lady was unable to bear the illiberal abuse which she heaped on him; he therefore satisfied himself with telling her, when she practised the duties of a wife, he would begin to study those of a husband; till then she had no right to complain, and left her to compose her spirits as she could, while he inquired of his valet what he knew concerning Rebecca.

He soon learnt, by inquiries being made among the servants, that Rebecca was dismissed, and that she had taken a place in the Lincolnshire stage, in order to return to her mother. This was sufficient intelligence for his lordship, and he began at once to plan schemes for getting her into his power.

When Rebecca came to take leave of the children, her feelings were beyond description. Miss Ossiter hung about her neck; even Charles and James begged her not to go, and they would be good boys and never vex her by behaving ill again. She embraced them all tenderly, and with a heart almost broken, got into a hackney-coach which took her to the inn whence the stage was to set out. She asked to be shown to

an apartment, and ordered some trifle for supper, then sitting down by a little solitary fire, began to reflect on her vexations, nor did she consider it as the least, that she was obliged to return to her mother, who had written to her but twice during her residence in London, and even those letters were short and cold.

The five hundred pounds Mrs Harley had given her, she did not consider as her own property, and besides that, she was possessed of but ten guineas in the world; to be sure she had a few valuable trinkets, presents from lady Mary, and a good stock of clothes; but what was that? when she wanted support it would soon be gone. In the midst of these painful reflections she drew the picture of her benefactress from her bosom, and contemplated it as her chief, her almost only comfort. But, examining it more minutely than she had ever before done, she thought she discovered something like a spring on the edge of the setting, and pressing her finger on it, the back flew off and discovered to her the portrait of sir George fixed behind that of his mother.

Spite of herself she could not help gazing on it with pleasure, and when she considered the delicacy with which he had managed to present it to her, he rose higher than ever in her esteem.

‘Ah,’ said she, ‘he certainly loves me;

and is worthy my esteem. Why are we not born for each other? for sure I am I could be content with sir George, though in a humble station: more—far more happy than in an elevated sphere; for in the humbler walks of life the felicity we experience must proceed from a mutual desire to please; but in an exalted station we live not for ourselves but others, at least if we have not fortitude to scorn the sneers of the fashionable world.'

Rebecca could not help considering the possession of this portrait, at this period, as an invaluable treasure, and in her own breast vowed not to part from it. She indulged herself with gazing at it while she sat up, and when she retired to bed, laid it on her pillow, and fell into a composed slumber, which lasted till called at four o'clock to join the passengers in the coach. Refreshed and comforted by the rest she had taken, she arose with alacrity to pursue her journey, and nothing material occurred till they had proceeded upwards of fifty miles from town, when the coach was overtaken by a post chaise and four, in which was a man, who stopped the coachman and asked if there was not a young person within of the name of Littleton. 'Yes,' cried Rebecca, innocently looking out of the window, 'my name is Littleton.'

'Ah, ma'am,' cried the man, 'I am com-

manded to entreat you to return. Miss Ossiter was last night taken extremely ill, and continually cries for you; my lady therefore begs you will forget what is past, and come and take your usual station in the family.—She is convinced of your innocence, but if disagreeable to yourself, she will only desire you to remain till Miss Ossiter is better.'

Rebecca's heart, formed for the warmest affection, beat high when she heard of her little favorite's illness. The ill treatment she had experienced from lady Ossiter was instantly forgotten, and she thought only of returning as quick as possible to attend the dear little girl. She sprang hastily from the coach, and only taking with her a small portmanteau containing a necessary change of linen, got into the chaise, and though drawn as fast as four horses could carry her, she thought every moment an hour, so anxious was she to arrive in Bedford-Square.

It was very late when Rebecca entered London, and she was not enough acquainted with the streets to know whether she was going right or wrong; therefore, when the chaise stopped in a large square, she jumped eagerly out and ran into the house, without once considering whether she knew the place; but when she had got into the hall and the door was shut, just as she was going to run up stairs, the staircase, which was

different from the one she had been used to, struck her, and turning hastily round to demand why she was brought to a strange place, she saw the parlor door open, and in an instant lord Ossiter was at her feet.

‘Good heaven!’ said she, ‘where am I? why am I thus betrayed?’

‘You are not betrayed my adorable Miss Littleton,’ said he; ‘let me entreat you to be calm. Grieved to the soul that lady Ossiter should have treated you so unworthily, I made use of an innocent stratagem to bring you back, that I might obtain your pardon, and convince you that I am ready to expiate with my life, the offence she has committed against you.’

‘If that is all,’ cried Rebecca, scarcely able to respire, through terror, ‘assure yourself I have forgiven you, my lord, and will pardon the deceit you have been guilty of, if you will suffer me to quit this house, where every moment I remain, fills me with anguish and terror.’

‘Why do you wish to quit this house, my dear angel?’ said he, forcibly leading her into the parlor; ‘it is yours, every thing in it is yours, all the servants are ready to obey your commands.’ Then ringing the bell, he ordered all the servants to appear, and bid them consider Rebecca as their mistress, and obey her as they valued his future favor.

‘Ah, my friends,’ said Rebecca, ‘do not attend to what he says; I have no right to command you, I am only a servant, like yourselves, and such I wish to remain; only continue to me just heaven!’ cried she, fervently raising her eyes and hands, ‘my innocence unsullied, and my integrity of mind unshaken.’

‘Be composed, my dearest love,’ said his lordship, dismissing the servants, ‘no harm shall happen to you while under my protection.’

‘Oh!’ cried she, in an agony, ‘I see, unless some protecting angel hovers over me, I am threatened with the worst of dangers. Let me go, sir! By what authority do you detain me here?’

‘Whither would you go, my dear creature, at this late hour? if you quit this house no reputable door will open to receive you, and I am sure my sweet Rebecca would not enter a house of infamy.’

‘Alas, alas! my lord, I fear I have done that already, though heaven knows how innocently.’

‘My lovely girl, do but compose your agitated spirits, and every thing will appear to you in a different light; let me send your own woman to you, she shall wait on you to your apartment, where I beg you will take some refreshment, and endeavor to repose yourself; I swear to you, Rebecca, I will not

enter your chamber till you give me leave.'

'Merciful heaven!' cried she, 'what will become of me?'

Lord Ossiter retired, and an elderly woman made her appearance with candles.

Rebecca for a few moments stood irresolute; at length she determined to go up stairs with the woman, and by a pretended calmness, endeavor to sound her principles, and whether she was entirely devoted to the interest of her lord. When she was in the apartment which the woman called her own, she sat down on a sofa, and calmly inquired who slept in the adjoining apartment.

'I do, madam,' was the answer.

'Have you been long in this house?'

'I was only hired yesterday, madam:—and my lord's gentleman informed me the house was taken for a young lady, a relation of his master who was expected from the country.'

'And when do you expect she will arrive?' said Rebecca, with assumed indifference.

'Madam,' cried the woman, staring, 'are you not the lady?'

'No, indeed, I am no relation of his lordship; I lived in his family as a servant to dress, undress, and teach Miss Ossiter to read.'

'But you are just from the country now, madam.'

‘I was on my journey into the country, when I was fetched back again; I understood Miss Ossiter was ill.’

‘My lord undoubtedly has a great regard for you, and means to give you in this house a brilliant establishment. You can certainly have no objection to exchange servitude for affluence.’

‘It is a desirable change, certainly, if made on honorable terms.’

‘Liberality, my dear madam, is sometimes an equivalent for honor.’

‘Are these your real sentiments?’ cried Rebecca, with a scrutinizing look.

‘They are the sentiments of one half of the world—’

‘But had you a child, would you talk to her in this strain; would you wish her to barter all she ought to hold dear in life, for the paltry consideration of splendor?’

She looked, as she spoke, earnestly in the woman’s face: it was an entreating, supplicating look, and the tears gushed from her eyes.

‘I had a daughter once,’ replied the attendant (whom we shall distinguish by the name of Harris:) ‘she was lovely as you are—she was once as innocent; but innocence could not shield her from the calumny of the world, and ill treatment depraved a heart formed for the love and practice of virtue.’ She paused, her eyes filled, and

Rebecca began to hope she should find a friend that would assist her in escaping the artful snare spread by lord Ossiter, to entrap her innocence.

‘And can you, my dear madam,’ said she, in a most persuasive tone of voice, ‘can you who have felt so much for a child, behold a poor forlorn creature, who, unless you help her, must be inevitably lost; plunged into that abyss of guilt and misery, which must sink her beneath the regard of every virtuous person. Oh! rather stretch forth your hand and save her. I am innocent now, be thou my guardian angel, and deliver me from this dreadful place. I can work, and I am not ashamed to work, even in the meanest capacity; I will be ashamed of nothing but dishonor.’

Mrs Harris raised her, and spoke to her words of comfort. They sat together till the clock struck four, and then taking off their shoes, and putting out the light, they stole softly down stairs and out at the street door. Mrs Harris knew where she should find a stand of night coaches, and proceeding there without molestation, they got into one, and drove to a decent looking house in the borough, the mistress of which readily admitted them, and Rebecca having offered up her thanksgiving to the protector of innocence, retired to a homely but clean bed,

and enjoyed several hours of uninterrupted repose.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN Rebecca awoke she found herself greatly refreshed, and arose with a heart deeply impressed with gratitude to Mrs Harris, who had thus unexpectedly delivered her from the worst of all evils. She went down stairs, and as she was taking her breakfast began to talk of what she must do in future. 'I had some intentions of returning to my mother,' said she, 'but I think now I had rather endeavor to get a place. I have but a trifle in my purse, but by writing to Lincolnshire I can have my trunks returned, and I have some money in them, and I will beg your acceptance of part of it for the eminent service you have rendered me; in the mean time I shall be much obliged to you if you could recommend me to a place, if you heard of any thing which you thought would suit me.'

Mrs Harris and her friend gave our heroine a cordial invitation to remain with them till she could hear from her mother, and promised to inquire for a place which might suit her abilities, as she seemed to wish to wait on a very young lady, or be compan-

ion to an elderly one, as she was certain her constitution would not suffer her to engage with a woman of fashion, who kept a great deal of company and late hours, of which she had experienced a sufficient specimen in lady Ossiter.

Rebecca addressed a letter to her mother, briefly informing her she had left her lady and was in quest of another place. That she had, at first, intended to return home, and to that end had forwarded her trunk, which she requested might be sent to town again by the first conveyance. In about four days she received the following answer :

‘DEAR CHILD,

‘I am sorry to find you have left lady Ossiter, as I imagine you must have grossly offended her ladyship before she could have parted with you, as you was such a favorite with her mother; however, Rebecca, you chose to leave your father’s house and to conduct yourself by the advice of strangers, you therefore know best, child, what you are about; I shall not take upon me to advise where I know my advice will be disregarded. As to coming into the country, I think it would be putting yourself to a needless expense, as I know you would never be happy to stay here; and sensible as I was of that, you cannot wonder I have chosen a companion and protector for myself, and by

uniting with the worthy Mr Serle have, upon his daughter and family, a claim to those tendernesses and attentions I in vain expected from my own child. Mr Serle went to the inn and inquired for your trunk, but we can hear nothing of it; you must, therefore, inquire for it at the inn whence the coach sets out in London.

‘As you always were, or pretended to be a little philosopher, I have no doubt but you will get very well through the world; and you have youth and a good constitution on your side. I shall always be glad to hear of your welfare; above all things, Rebecca, be modest and virtuous; and mind your religious duties, as your poor father and I always taught you, and never forget that you have a mother who loves you, and to whom all your duty and respect is due. Mr Serle and Miss Peggy desire me to give their best wishes to you, though they have no acquaintance with you.

I am, dear child,

Your affectionate mother,

R. SERLE.’

Rebecca’s sensations on the receipt of this letter, are better imagined than described. Scarcely six months had elapsed since the death of her father, and her mother was married again, that mother who, but a short time since had declared, that to be suspect-

ed capable of admitting a second partner, was an insult that hurt her feelings excessively.

Rebecca now felt that she was in reality a poor solitary being, without a home, and almost without a friend; to be sure Mrs Harris had been very kind to her, but could she expect that kindness to last when she had lost the power of making any recompense. However, she determined to make some inquiry concerning her trunk, and to that end requested Mrs Harris to accompany her; but all the tidings she could learn were, that the coachman had left it in the country, and that he had since heard it had been taken away by a person who said he came from Miss Littleton herself, with orders to pay all necessary expenses.

‘Was there any thing of much value in the trunk?’ said Mrs Harris.

‘Alas!’ cried Rebecca, ‘there was the greatest part of my clothes, and a five hundred pound bank note, which I had to keep for a person who is gone abroad.’

‘Pray, child, what kind of a man is this father-in-law of yours?’

‘Indeed I can hardly tell you; he never visited my father during his life, nor did I ever see him above twice, except at church; he has been a widower some years, and has one daughter; he is an attorney by profes-

sion, but I believe he never had much practice.'

'Perhaps your mother's annuity was the object that invited this marriage.'

'It may be so, but I can hardly think it, for at the utmost it is not more than forty pounds a year. My mother has an agreeable person, and lively manner; I do not think it improbable but he may have married her for love.'

'I do not think it unlikely but he has got your trunk.'

'Dear, Mrs Harris, how can you suggest such a thing? you quite shock me.'

'Shock you or not, I think that is really the case, and I would advise you to pursue legal methods to discover it.'

'No,' cried Rebecca, resolutely, 'never; I cannot bring myself to suspect that my mother would unite herself to a man capable of such an action; and if that were really the case, I hope I have too high a sense of filial respect to attempt exposing her to the malicious censures of a world, who would not fail to involve her, however innocent, in her husband's guilt. My own interest shall ever give way to her peace of mind, for she was the chosen companion, the bosom friend of the best of fathers, and though she seems to have forgotten that I am her child, I can never forget that she is my mother.'

'All this may be very clever, for what I

know,' said Mrs Harris, 'but I am sure in my opinion, it is very ridiculous. You will find, my poor simple child, your six guineas will go but a very little way towards buying you clothes for a decent place; however, we must not meet troubles half way, it will be time enough when you have got a place, to think about preparing to go to it; but I have an acquaintance who lives in this street, and who, perhaps, may have it in her power to help you to something.'

They called on the person mentioned, who was a lady's woman, in an opulent merchant's family. Mrs Harris mentioned Rebecca's intentions, and learnt that there was a country lady, then on a visit to this family, who had parted with her maid, and was in want of one to supply her place. Rebecca thought she could venture to take such a situation in a regular quiet family. She was introduced to the lady, who, struck with her lovely person and modest demeanor, conceived an instantaneous prepossession in her favor, and engaged her upon liberal terms, to enter her service on that day week.

Rebecca felt extremely happy that she should no longer be a burden upon the kind Mrs Harris, and eagerly set about preparing, as well as the narrow state of her finances would allow, to take possession of her new place.

Mrs Barton (the name of Rebecca's new

mistress) was a pleasant lively brunette, about twenty years old. She had married, when very young, contrary to the advice of her friends, a young man of some fortune and rather flighty character, but she had twenty thousand pounds at her own disposal, and her motto was, 'All for love.'

Barton was really attached to her in the first years of their marriage, but his temper was too versatile to be long constant to any thing; he in time grew cool, and often played her false, but she was of such an even, cheerful, unsuspecting temper, so unaffectedly tender, so attentive to his interest, and studious of his peace, that he found it impossible to treat her with unkindness, so that there was always an appearance of much cordiality between them, for though she could not shut her eyes and ears upon his infidelities, she wisely concluded it was prudent sometimes to be wilfully deaf and blind, and that if good humor would not reclaim him, ill humor would certainly make him worse.

With this couple Rebecca went into Shropshire, a few weeks after she entered Mrs Barton's service. Their house was a venerable gothic building, situated in the midst of a beautiful park, and had fallen to Mrs Barton on the death of her godfather, from whom also she inherited her independent fortune. Rebecca found herself much

at her ease, Mrs Barton was very kind to her, and finding she possessed an intelligent mind, often made her the companion of her rambles about the grounds and adjacent country. Mr Barton troubled his lady but little with his company, except at meals, and sometimes not then; nay, he even went so far as to sleep from home several nights in the week; and this being a liberty he had never before taken, without his wife being informed of the cause, she felt herself really uneasy, and though when he was present she assumed her usual cheerfulness, it was impossible to conquer her feelings, so as not to let her chagrin and mortification appear to Rebecca, who sincerely pitied, and by every assiduity in her power, endeavored to amuse and entertain her. Mrs Barton kept but little company; she was fond of reading, drawing, music and fancy works; in these she discovered Rebecca's taste and knowledge, and many a heavy hour she beguiled in joining the labors of her lady, improving her judgment, and with the sweetest diffidence and humility correcting her errors.

In the mean time lord Ossiter provoked beyond measure, that a scheme he had imagined infallible, should have proved totally abortive, despatched his faithful valet off to Lincolnshire, in hopes to find the fair fugitive there, and get her once more into his power; but here he was again foiled; for

though Rebecca had written to her mother, that she had engaged with a Mrs Barton, yet she had not mentioned in what part of the country the family usually resided, so that the faithful ambassador returned to his disappointed lord without the least consolatory intelligence.

CHAPTER IX.

THE visits of Barton from home became now too long and too frequently repeated not to give his wife serious cause for uneasiness; she secretly resolved to discover, if possible, to whom he devoted so large a portion of his time.

Now it so happened, that about seven miles from Belle Park, on the side of a craggy hill, watered by an impetuous stream, that rushed from the upper part of the declivity, stood an old mill, and by the side of the mill stood an old thatched cottage, within which lived an old couple, who had a very young and very lovely grand-daughter. Now though this old man was the owner of the mill and the cottage, and ground many a bushel of corn for his poor neighbors, of which he never failed to take his regular toll, yet it so happened that he was but poor himself. The cottage, we have said, was

old, so that the chilling blasts of winter, and the scorching heats of summer found easy entrance through its shattered frame; but Dolly, the blooming Dolly, was the pride of their hearts, and often, as they sat smoking their evening's pipe, they would gaze on her sparkling black eyes, ruddy complexion, and delicate shape, and cry, 'Ah, surely that girl is born to be the comfort of our old age; she is so handsome, there is no doubt but she will get some squire for a husband, or, mayhap, the lord of the manor. Ah bless the dear face of it, I shall live to see her a great lady I warrant, and then it will send people to mend old grandad's cottage, and repair the crazy old mill.' These were the waking dreams of doating age, for, alas, Dolly had reached her seventeenth year and no squire had yet made his appearance, to verify her grandmother's prophecy. However, about this time one of Mr Barton's footmen, a smart lad, about nineteen years old, saw this paragon of rustic beauty at a neighboring fair, and, unfortunately for his master's horses from that day, whenever he was despatched to the neighboring town or villages on messages, errands, or what not, he always found the old miller's cottage lay directly in the way between Belle Park and the place to which he was despatched.

One evening Mr Barton having mounted his horse and called Thomas to attend him

in his intended excursion, being undetermined which way to go, asked the lad if he had discovered lately any new ride; for, said he I have gone the old track so often I am weary of it. Thomas, full of the charms of Dolly, and eager to embrace the smallest opportunity of beholding them, or at least the cottage that contained them, asked his master if he had ever rode by Gaffer Jobson's mill.

'Tis not above seven miles off, your honor, and is the sweetest romantickest kind of a place, with trees and rocks and a river: then the mill is so old, your honor, that it looks, for all the world, like the places we read about in story books.'

Barton smiled, and being directed by Thomas as to the road he was to take, cantered off, followed by the happy lover, exulting in the thought of seeing his mistress, though it were but for a moment. But, perhaps, thought he, master may stop to look at the place, and then I can slip in for a minute, and just speak to Dolly.

Alas, poor Thomas, thou art as blind as many other wise politicians, or thou wouldst never have taken thy master to see the cottage and the mill.

The sun was beginning to withdraw itself behind the hill tops, when gaffer having lighted his pipe and gammar put by her wheel, had seated themselves on the steps

of their cottage, to talk over old times, and dream, as usual, of Dolly's good fortune—Dolly had just tied on a clean colored apron, smoothed back her luxuriant chestnut hair, and seated beneath a tree not far distant from the door, was earnestly contriving to dispose to the best advantage three yards of cherry colored riband, which Thomas had given her, round a chip-hat, in which she thought to outshine all her companions the next Sunday at church, Lifting her eyes from this very interesting employment, who should she see but the identical Mr Thomas and a fine young gentleman riding towards the mill.

Up she bounced. 'See, see, grandad,' said she, eagerly, 'see yon fine gentleman and Mr Thomas.'

She spake loud, the evening was serene; her voice vibrated on the ear of Barton; he turned his head, the old mill, the trees, and rocks were no longer interesting objects.—'I will have a little chat with the old man,' said he, guiding his horse that way, but his eyes were fixed on the lovely form of Dolly. He chatted with the old couple till nearly dark, and as he rode homeward could think only on the charms of their grand-daughter. The next evening he rode that way again, unattended, talked something about repairing the mill, and kissed Dolly at parting. Another and another interview succeeded.

Thomas was constantly kept employed at home, and a few guineas, a new gown, and two or three glittering gewgaws had the power to banish him as entirely from Dolly's memory, as though he had never held a place there. The squire as she called him, occupied all her thought, and a well a day for poor human nature, the squire triumphed over all the virtue Dolly ever possessed. The old folks too, wilfully shut their eyes, and in listening to projected repairs, and thinking of future prosperity, forgot it was to be purchased by the infamy of their grand-daughter.

But Barton was by no means a liberal lover; he talked much, but performed little; and though he slept several nights in a week at gaffer Jobson's, he was content to sleep on their homely mattress, nor once thought of providing another.

Poor Thomas, mortified to the soul, could not conceal his vexation, nor did he make a secret of the cause among his fellow-servants. It was whispered from one to another, till at length it reached Mrs Barton; not from Rebecca, for she would not have told such a tale to a distressed wife to obtain the highest consideration; she would have feared the effect it would have on her feelings, and agonized with the poor sufferer in idea a thousand times. But Mrs Barton was a woman of spirit; she felt her husband's neg-

lect severely, but she would more severely have felt the pity of her servants; she took care, therefore, not to appear to need it.

‘Do you know, child,’ said she to Rebecca one day as she was assisting her to dress, ‘do you know, child, that this truant husband of mine is fallen in love with some chubby faced little chit in the neighborhood, and prefers the company of her and her ignorant relations to my elegant society, and their hard bed and coarse sheets to his own made of down and covered with the finest holland; do you not think the man is turned fool?’

She said this with such a smile of good humor, that Rebecca looked at her with amazement, and hesitatingly replied, ‘He is certainly blind to his own comfort and felicity, madam.’

‘Oh, no, I dare say the indulgence of these whims constitutes what he calls happiness; but I must confess he seems totally indifferent about mine, and as this is the case, I shall take what steps I think proper to secure some for myself. Now I have a vast desire to see this irresistible lass of the mill, and as I know that he dines at Mr Thornhill’s to day, this afternoon I will pay her a visit, and you shall accompany me.’

Rebecca thought this an odd step, but she had a high opinion of Mrs Barton’s sense and prudence, and therefore prepared to at-

tend her, without intimating the least disapprobation of the scheme, which she certainly would have ventured to do, had she not been satisfied that her lady had some very good reasons for her conduct.

About four o'clock they stepped into the chariot, and proceeded to the mill without any attendant. They left the carriage within half a mile of the cottage, and went thither on foot, pretended weariness, and asked leave to rest and have a draught of water. 'Would you like a little wine in your water, my lady?' said the old woman.

'I should badly have supposed,' replied Mrs Barton, 'that your cottage afforded such a luxury.'

'Why, in good truth, we ne'er had such a thing before, and now gaffer and I don't much care for drinking a'nt, we'd rather have a cup of yale; but squire that courts our Dolly sent some that he may have a little when he comes.'

'Your daughter is going to be married then?'

'Tis my grand-daughter, my lady,' said the old woman, courtesying. At that moment the back door opened and in bounced Dolly. She blushed, courtesied awkwardly, and would have spoken, but was at a loss what to say. Prepared as Mrs Barton was to see something extremely lovely, the charms of this little rustic surpassed her im-

agination. 'What a lovely creature,' said she, softly, to Rebecca, 'how could Barton be so wantonly cruel as to contaminate the soul that animates this beauteous form.' The tears started in her eyes as she spoke, but she brushed them away unperceived. 'And so, my dear, you are going to be married, I understand, and to a squire. I have some idea he is a friend of mine. I believe he spends much of his time here, but I think your accommodations are not very brilliant. You must give me leave to send you some better furniture, and to give orders to have your house repaired. And should your lover inquire who ordered these things, tell him it was a lady who has a great regard for him, and lives at the old-fashioned house in the park.'

Manifold were the courtesies and awkward acknowledgments poured forth by the grandmother and Dolly, but Mrs Barton imagined she saw in the countenance of the latter mingled shame and regret. 'If we could save this poor girl,' said she to Rebecca, when they were seated again in the carriage, 'If we could save her and teach her the value of the gem she has thus unconsciously thrown away, we might then lead her back to virtue, and, spite of her errors, she may yet become a valuable member of society.'

The carriage drove to the nearest town, when Mrs Barton went to an upholsterer's

and ordered whatever she thought necessary, to be taken immediately to the cottage; she likewise engaged a carpenter to send people the next day to begin the repairs, and on returning home, she despatched a large bundle of sheets, table-linen, &c. by a poor laborer who knew nothing of the reports current in the family. Rebecca easily saw her lady's design, and almost trembled for the event; indeed Mrs Barton herself could scarcely have been less agitated. That night Barton returned late, and having a large party to dine the next day, it was impossible for him to visit his fair dulcinea till the ensuing morning, and then, just as he was going, a gentleman arrived from town and detained him till after dinner.

'I shall not be at home tonight, Betsey,' said he, as he mounted his horse, 'I have an engagement with two or three jovial fellows, and shall not like to ride home late.'

Mrs Barton smiled; 'I wish you a pleasant evening,' said she, 'and as I am sure of your being out of the way, I will send for my gallant.'

'You threaten well, Betsey, but I have too good an opinion of you to fear its execution.'

Tea and supper were served without Mrs Barton's being any the better for them; she became violently agitated; Rebecca was summoned to attend her, but alas, Rebecca could not comfort her. The clock had just

struck eleven, when the bell at the great gate was rung with violence.

‘He is returned,’ said she, ‘and a few minutes will now decide my fate. My good Rebecca leave me.’

Barton entered the room with the looks of a condemned criminal. ‘Betsey,’ said he, ‘where were you the day before yesterday, and how did you employ your time?’

‘Not in a manner disagreeable to you, I hope,’ said she, mildly; ‘I had heard how partial you were to sleeping at the mill cottage, and I took a ride to see if you were well accommodated; but I found the bed intolerable, and the house in such a miserable state, I thought you ran great risks of getting cold; so, being unwilling to lose you, I thought it was my duty, as a good wife, to provide you with better conveniences.’

‘My dear Betsey, how can you talk thus calmly, when you know how much I have injured you?’

‘Barton,’ said she, with a firm look and voice, ‘I am not now to learn that I am no longer beloved; but it was no reason because you had grown weary of home, you should trifle away your life by sleeping in a place almost entirely open to nightly dews, and unsheltered even by curtains to your bed. But mark me, my dear Barton, that I love you, I trust you have had innumerable incontestible proofs; but if I am no lon-

ger beloved, if my society and endearments can no longer give you pleasure, let us part. Why should you deprive yourself of the comforts and conveniences of life? Let our fortune be divided; leave me to solitude and quiet in this place, and take your favorite to the Elms. But I charge you, Barton, delay not a day to make her a proper settlement, lest you hereafter grow weary of her, and she fall a victim to poverty and infamy. She is a beauteous flower, pity it is she was ever transplanted into the garden of folly.'

'Betsey,' said he, dropping on his knees before her, and taking both her hands, 'Betsey, you are an angel, and I am totally unworthy your forgiveness; I see my doom, I see my folly has banished all the tenderness of your heart, and you wish to be separated from a wretch who has treated you so unworthily.'

'You are mistaken, Barton, if you think I wish to be separated from you, could I once more be the mistress of your affections; to live with you, to love you, to promote your happiness would be the pleasure of my life, but I cannot have a divided heart; if another is preferred, let me not, by constantly witnessing your indifference towards myself, suffer pains too acute to be borne without complaining.'

'Oh, Betsey! dearest girl, forgive me, and

take my whole, my undivided heart; do with it what you please, it never shall again wander from you, its chosen mistress.'

Mrs Barton could no longer combat the impulse of her throbbing heart; she dropped her head on the forehead of her repentant husband, and tears of unfeigned joy ratified their reconciliation.

'But what must we do with poor Dolly?' said she, after a pause of a few moments.

'I commit her to your care, my love,' replied Barton, 'sensible that you will do whatever is best for her future well doing; for my part, I will never see her again.'

'Nay, Barton, keep your passions under the guidance of reason, and you may see her without danger.'

Mrs Barton let no time elapse in merely forming plans for Dolly. She took an opportunity to sound Thomas's sentiments concerning her, and found the poor lad as deeply in love as ever. 'And would you be willing to marry her, Thomas, provided the mill was repaired, and she had a few acres of ground well stocked?' Thomas replied in the affirmative, and Dolly being found no ways unwilling to comply, a few weeks made them man and wife. Barton desired his lady to spare no expense necessary to make them quite comfortable, and he literally kept his promise of never seeing Dolly again.

But though his resolves in regard to future constancy were seriously made, his heart was made of such inflammable matter, that he no sooner began to contemplate the unassuming charms of Rebecca, which, from being much at home, he had now sufficient leisure to do, than he found himself puzzled to keep his good resolutions; and being unaccustomed to combat his inclinations, he found this first attempt at self-conquest too painful to be persevered in; and Mrs Barton, with anguish of heart, saw he was again relapsing into indifference and inconstancy.

Rebecca too saw, with evident displeasure, the many opportunities he took of throwing himself in her way. It was sometimes impossible to avoid listening to him on a subject which filled her with disgust and sorrow. He offered her several valuable trinkets, which she resolutely refused to accept; but at length his conduct became so unequivocal, that Rebecca determined to quit her amiable mistress, however unwilling to relinquish a situation in which she had enjoyed so much tranquillity.

Mrs Barton quickly discovered the motives of our heroine's intention, and honored her for them.

'You are a truly amiable girl, Rebecca,' said she, 'and I will not part with you, till I can recommend you to some person who will be sensible of your value.'

The next morning Mrs Barton informed her that, during a visit she had made the preceding afternoon, she had heard of a situation which she thought might prove highly advantageous to her. 'But, perhaps,' said she, 'you would not like to leave England.'

'All places are alike to me,' said Rebecca; 'I have so very few friends who interest themselves at all in my welfare, that provided my mother gives her assent, I can have no objection to quitting a place where every tie is broken that once rendered it most dear to me.'

'Well then,' said Mrs Barton, 'there is a young lady who has been in England for her education; she is now about sixteen years old, of an amiable temper, and highly accomplished. Her father, who resides in America, has sent for her home, and her governess has been inquiring for a prudent well educated young person to accompany her. The terms offered are fifty guineas, and all expenses paid, and should you not approve of residing there, on your arrival, they will pay your passage back again.'

'Colonel Abthorpe is a man of large fortune; he has formerly served in the army, but at the conclusion of the war resigned his commission, and retired to America, his lady being a native of that place. Miss Abthorpe goes out in about six weeks, and if

you should like to accompany her, I have no doubt but you are the kind of person that will suit her.'

Rebecca was pleased with the proposal; she waited on the lady with whom Miss Abthorpe had been educated, and was highly approved of, both by her and the young lady herself. She then wrote to her mother, and in a few posts received a letter, dictated by her mother, but written by her sister-in-law, and in such cold slighting terms, that she easily saw they would be glad to have her so far from them, that there might be no danger of her coming home, in case of sickness or other contingencies; she therefore took leave of the amiable Mrs Barton, who could not part with her without tears, and who presented her with several valuable memorials of her friendship.

The day after Rebecca entered Miss Abthorpe's service she set off for London, where she was to join Mr Seward's family, who were to embark on board the same ship with her, and under whose protection she was to proceed to New-England. It was late in September when they arrived in town, and a variety of incidents detained them till the middle of October, so that they had but an untoward prospect before them, when so late in the season they embarked at Deal, on board a brig bound for Boston. A fair wind presently took them out of the channel, and

they flattered themselves with a prosperous voyage; but these flattering appearances were soon reversed, for the wind suddenly changed, rising almost to a hurricane, so that it was impossible to pursue their intended course, or return to port, and they continued tossing about in the Atlantic till the latter end of December, and then had not half made their passage, though their provisions were so exhausted that they were obliged to live on a very small allowance of bread; of the water and salt meat which they had, together with a few pease, they were extremely careful.

Poor Rebecca heartily wished herself on shore again, but sensible those wishes were unavailing, she confined them to her own bosom, and exerted herself to support the spirits of Miss Abthorpe, who, naturally delicate and unaccustomed to fatigue, was nearly exhausted with terror, confinement and hunger. In a few weeks they were reduced almost to extremities; they had not even a candle to light the binnacle which contains the compass, and the whole of their allowance now amounted to one biscuit and half a pint of water per day to each person. Mr Seward had on board the ship with him, besides two fine boys, the one fourteen, the other twelve years old, a charming little girl scarcely seven. Mrs Seward had been dead some years, and the child was accompanied

by her nurse. The chief anguish this faithful servant felt was in contemplating her little charge, and thinking how she was to be preserved; indeed, to such a height did her affection rise, that she voluntarily deprived herself of part of the very small portion allotted her, that she might lay it by against a time of more eminent necessity for this darling of her heart.*

It was a clear cold day, the wind blowing strongly against them, when the master of the vessel entered the cabin with a smile. A smile at that particular time was received by all as a good omen, for seldom had such a thing been seen in their melancholy party.

‘There is a ship bearing down upon us,’ said he; ‘I have made signal of distress, and no doubt we shall be relieved.’

Hope, sweet solace of the wretched, played round the hearts of his auditors as he pronounced these words; and all who were able crawled upon deck to watch, with eager eyes, the near approach of the expected relief. The vessel drew nigh, and the master inquired what was the matter.

‘We are in the utmost distress,’ said Mr Seward, who took upon him to answer.—‘We have been ten weeks at sea, our provi-

* This was a fact, the dear woman who accompanied the author in her first voyage across the Atlantic actually lived, for many days, on half a biscuit a day, to reserve the other moiety for her.

sions are exhausted, and we are in danger of starving.'

'I am sorry for it,' replied the master of the other vessel; 'but though we have a good wind now, we do not know how soon it may change, and we may want our provisions ourselves.'

It was in vain to attempt a reply; the vessel was again put before the wind, and in a few moments the intervening billows, which rose to a tremendous height, hid her from their view.

Silent and sad the disheartened mariners and passengers left the deck. Mr Seward took his little girl in his arms, his two boys hung on each side of him; he endeavored at a look of fortitude, but the gushing tears betrayed the anguish of the paternal heart. Rebecca seated herself on her bed; Miss Abthorpe looked up in her face for comfort, but she had none to offer; she sighed and rested her head on Rebecca's shoulder.

'What shall we do?' said she, mournfully.

'Trust in God,' replied Rebecca, faintly pressing her hand.

Miss Abthorpe returned the pressure, and they joined in fervently committing themselves to the care of Him who could save to the uttermost.

Ten days more passed on in this dreadful manner, when another vessel was discover-

ed, but, alas! hope refused to cheer their bosoms with her faintest ray.

‘We must make an attempt to move their compassion, however,’ said the master. Mr Seward assented to the proposal, and they ascended the deck together; but Rebecca and her young lady sat pensive and silent; they hardly dared to hope, and the sweet comforts of religion forbade them to despair.

The noise on the deck prevented their hearing what was said, or whether any answer was returned to their entreaties. In a few minutes the noise increased almost to tumult; a confused shout broke forth, which the poor listening females mistook for a murmur of horror and disappointment.

‘They have refused us,’ cried Miss Abthorpe, endeavoring to rise from her bed.

‘I am afraid they have, indeed,’ said Rebecca; but do not you attempt to go on deck, stay here and I will go and inquire.’ With tremulous and unequal steps after repeated attempts, Rebecca reached the gang-way. She was just going to mount the steps, when her intent was frustrated by a sudden motion of the ship, and she fell down. ‘Heaven preserve me!’ said she, as she slowly arose.

‘Heaven has preserved us all,’ said Mr Seward, as he descended the steps, ‘for look my good girl, what a dinner its bounty has sent us.’

At that moment a strange sailor came down with a large wooden bowl, in which was a fine piece of boiled beef, some potatoes, and a piece of pudding.

‘God bless your pretty hearts!’ said the sailor, looking round at Rebecca, Miss Abthorpe; and the young Swards, ‘come, fall to, and lay in a good cargo, for, according to the log, you are light enough now.’

‘You have robbed yourselves, I fear,’ said Rebecca; ‘this was intended for your dinners.’

‘That is neither here nor there,’ said he, putting a large quid of tobacco into his mouth; ‘and split my topsails if I would not rather rob myself any time, than see a brother sailor want a dinner. D——e we soon emptied the copper when we heard how close hauled you were, and set old stoke galley to work, to cook more; we brought enough for all, and they have fallen to above board like a parcel of hungry sharks.’

Oh ye sons and daughters of luxury, whose tables are covered with the most costly viands, and who turn from them dissatisfied and unthankful, could you feel for a moment the ecstasy that pervaded the hearts of the poor, weary, famished mariners, who now were partaking the provision their charitable brethren had brought them, you would henceforward justly conceive the happiness

of your own lot, and bow with gratitude to the divine dispenser of all blessings.

The friendly sailors now departed, having taken an inventory of what was most requisite for the relief of their brethren, and in about a hour and a half returned with their captain, and a supply of bread, cheese, meat, butter, and candles; also a small quantity of spirituous liquors to refresh the men.

‘We must give you a bill on the owners,’ said Mr Seward, when he had taken an account of the stores brought on board.

‘No,’ replied the generous captain, ‘I shall take no bill. I expect no reward. I may one day be in the same situation, and have only done as I would be done by.’

* Exalted humanity, noble, disinterested sailor, may you ever experience from your fellow creatures the same benevolence that expands and elevates your own heart. May your days be many, and your prosperity equal to your deserts.

Having taken a grateful leave of their benefactor, they, with renovated spirits, pursued their voyage, and the wind changing, in the course of a few days, drove them rapidly towards their desired haven, so that on the twenty-eighth of January, about two in

* This apostrophe is the genuine emotion of gratitude, the author having, in a situation similar to the one described here, experienced relief bestowed in the same disinterested manner.

the afternoon, they heard the joyful news of 'land ahead.'

The port of Boston is situated in such a manner, that, after having made land, six or seven hours good sailing will take a vessel into safe harbor, so that our weary voyagers began to think of landing that evening, however late it might be when they arrived;—but as the night came on, the wind increased, accompanied by snow and sleet; the cold at the same time being intense, it froze as it fell, and in a very short period the ropes about the ship were so incased in ice that they became immovable; the darkness increased, and to add to their distress, they lost sight of the light-house at the entrance of the harbor.

Their situation now was imminently dangerous; driving before the wind, among a multitude of rocks and breakers, without the least chance of avoiding them; to be shipwrecked in the very sight of home, was a painful trial indeed, yet this was what all expected, and for which all endeavored to prepare themselves with patient resignation.

About ten o'clock all their fears were realized, and a sudden shock convinced them they had struck on some rocks. The ensuing scene from that time till seven the next morning is better imagined than described, for till that time they had no prospect of relief, but continued beating on the rocks, the

waves washing over them, and expecting momentary dissolution. As the day-light advanced they discovered the island, from which the reef ran, to be inhabited. Several muskets were immediately discharged, and signals hung out, and about eight o'clock they discovered people coming to their assistance. It was impossible to bring a boat near the vessel, but the tide beginning to leave her, the men waded into the water, and placed a ladder against her side, down which the fear of immediate death gave Miss Abthorpe and Rebecca courage to descend; but what were the feelings of Mr Seward, when he found the impossibility of his little daughter's going down, so dangerous was it rendered by the ice that enveloped the steps of the ladder, and whence, if she fell, she must have been dashed to pieces, or lost among the rocks; nor did he dare to venture to descend himself with her in his arms, lest a false step or slip might destroy them both. But there was not time for much deliberation, as it was absolutely necessary to leave the ship before the tide returned. At length an old sailor offered an expedient which was thought feasible; and the agitated parent fastened a strong cord round the waist of his child, by which he lowered her down the side of the vessel; the old sailor caught her in his arms, and bore her exultingly to the shore.

A new world was now opened to Rebecca, who, when she was a little recovered, beheld with astonishment how every object was bound in the frigid chains of winter.—The harbor which she could see from the house on the island, was one continued sheet of ice. The face of the country was entirely covered with snow, and from the appearance of all around she could form no probable hope of getting to colonel Abthorpe's till the genial influence of spring should unbind their fetters; but in this she was agreeably mistaken, for the inhabitants of those cold climates being accustomed to the weather, were quick in expedients to facilitate their conveyance from one place to another. The very next morning a boat was procured, and men placed at the head to break the ice as they proceeded. By two o'clock on the thirtieth of January, 1767, our heroine found herself once more on terra firma, comfortably seated at a large fire, in colonel Abthorpe's parlor; for during the voyage Miss Abthorpe had conceived such an esteem for her, that she insisted on her being considered as a friend and sister, and her parents had too high a respect for their daughter, to wish to contradict so laudable a desire.

CHAPTER X.

On the left hand of the entrance of Boston harbor is a beautiful little peninsula, called N——; it consists of two gradually rising hills, beautifully diversified with orchards, corn-fields, and pasture land. In the valley is built a little village, consisting of about fifty houses, the inhabitants of which could just make shift to decently support a minister, who on a Sunday ascended the pulpit, in a rustic temple, situated by the side of a piece of water, nearly in the middle of the village, and taught, to the utmost of his abilities, the true principles of Christianity.—The neck of land that joins this peninsula to the main is extremely narrow, and indeed is sometimes almost overflowed by the tide. On one side it forms a charming picturesque harbor, in which are a variety of small but delightfully fertile islands, and on the other it is washed by the ocean, to which it lays open. In this enchanting village stood Mr Abthorpe's house, in the midst of a neat and well cultivated garden; and here it was as the spring advanced, our contemplative heroine beheld with rapture the rapid progress of the infant vegetation, for the earth seemed hardly released from the fleecy garb of winter, before it burst forth in the full bloom of vernal pride.

In this agreeable situation Rebecca remained nearly six years, enjoying as much felicity as she could expect in the friendship of Mr and Mrs Abthorpe and the affection of their amiable daughter. It is true she sometimes sighed when she thought of sir George Worthy—sometimes gazed on his portrait and that of his mother till her eyes, overflowing, could no longer discern them. But these were luxuries, too dangerous to be often indulged in, they only served to enervate her mind, and render her incapable of enjoying the blessings placed within reach, and led her to repine at the wise dispensations of Providence; she therefore exerted her natural good sense to keep these acute sensibilities within proper restrictions, and by striving to be happy in her present situation, in a great measure became so.—She had many admirers, and might have entered into matrimonial engagements greatly to her advantage, but she resolutely refused them all, still maintaining towards each that invariable politeness and frankness of demeanor, as at the same moment extinguished their tenderer hopes and yet conciliated their esteem.

In the course of this time she had received two letters from Mrs Barton, and one from her mother; the former informed her that her husband was entirely reclaimed, that she was the happiest woman in the creation,

and that she hoped she should one day have Rebecca a witness to her felicity; the contents of the latter was not so pleasing; her mother complained of ill-treatment from her daughter-in-law, and extravagance in her husband; at the same time she informed her, she had just lain in of a boy, who she hoped would be the comfort of her old age.

‘I wish to heaven he may,’ said Rebecca, then laying down the letter and reflecting how many leagues she was from her only surviving parent; that perhaps she might be in heavy affliction, ill-treated by those on whom she had placed the firmest reliance, laughed at by the world, and not unlikely pinched by poverty. The gentle hearted girl burst into tears—‘Ah!’ said she, ‘why did I leave my native country? I should have remembered that my poor mother had no real friend but me, on whom she could safely rely for comfort in sickness or affliction; I should have remembered, that though she had preferred the friendship of others to mine, it was still my duty not to leave her exposed to misfortunes, which my presence and tender assiduities might have alleviated.’

About this time the unhappy breach between Great Britain and her colonies arose to such a height, that it never could be healed, and war, in her most frightful shape, began to stalk over this once happy land. Ere

this, the inhabitants of New-England, by their hospitality and primitive simplicity of manners, revived in the mind of our heroine the golden age, so celebrated by poets.— Here were no locks or bolts required, for each one, content with his own cot, coveted not the possessions of his neighbor; here, should a stranger make his appearance in their little village, though unknown by all, every one was eager to show him the most civility, inviting him to their houses, and treating him with every delicacy the simplicity of their manner of living afforded.

The only house of entertainment in this village had not custom enough to support its venerable mistress with the necessaries of life; but she had a garden, a cow, and a few acres of land, the produce of these were sufficient to supply her wants and wishes, and she would sit in her matted arm-chair, in a room whose only beauty was ‘the white washed wall, the nicely sanded floor,’ while the smile of content played about her face, and while she thankfully enjoyed the bounties of heaven, she remembered not that any could be richer or happier than herself.

But when fell discord spread her sable pinion, and shook her curling snakes, how soon this blissful prospect was reversed;—frighted at the horrid din of arms, hospitality fled her once favorite abode, mutual confidence was no more, and fraternal love gave

place to jealousy, dissension, and blind party zeal. The son raised his unhallowed arm against his parent, brothers drenched their weapons in each other's blood, and all was horror and confusion. The terrified inhabitants of N—— left the village and took refuge in the more interior parts of the country, all but Mr Abthorpe's family, who still remained, though deserted by all their servants; for the colonel had too high a regard for his royal master to join the cause of his enemies, and it was impossible to join the British troops without relinquishing all his property; he therefore hoped the storm would soon pass over; that some method would be proposed and accepted to conciliate matters, and in the mean time he wished to remain neuter.

It was a still morning, about the latter end of July, when Rebecca, being disturbed by some little rustling at her window, raised her head, and, by the faint dawn that just glimmered from the east, discovered armed men placed round the house. Alarmed, she started from her bed and awoke Miss Abthorpe; they threw a few clothes over them and flew to the colonel's apartment. They were met by Mrs Abthorpe, who caught her daughter in her arms, and, pointing to the room where they usually slept, cried, 'look Sophia, your poor father.'

Miss Abthorpe looked and beheld two sol-

diers with firelocks, who, placed at the door of the apartment, held her father a prisoner.

‘Ah, my dear mother,’ said she, ‘who are these, and what are they going to do? surely, surely they will not murder us.’

‘Don’t frighten yourself, Miss,’ said one of the men, ‘we do not usually murder such pretty girls.’

‘But my father,’ cried she, eagerly, ‘what do you intend to do with him?’

‘Set him at liberty again when our expedition is over.’

Rebecca now learnt that these were a part of the American army, who had come to N—— in whale boats, with a design of dragging their boats across the beach before-mentioned, and proceeding to the light-house at the entrance of the harbor, intending to destroy it, in order to mislead the expected relief that was coming to Boston, which was at that time besieged by the American army and in possession of the British: they had before made an unsuccessful attempt to demolish this light-house, and were now come resolved not to leave their work unfinished; accordingly they proceeded as quietly as possible to the beach, almost carried their boats over, and arrived totally unexpected at the little island on which the light-house stood, and which was guarded by a party of marines. A smart skirmish ensued, but the Americans were

too numerous to be withstood by so small a party; the whole of which were either killed or taken prisoners; and having completed their designs, returned to N——, victorious, though in the utmost consternation for fear of being pursued by boats from the Lively frigate, and other ships that lay in the harbor.

Rebecca was standing at a window as they relanded, the tears streaming down her pale face, and so entirely absorbed in terror that she was inattentive to the surrounding objects. From this state of torpor she was aroused by a deep groan, and, raising her eyes, saw two Americans entering the house, bearing between them a wounded marine, whom they laid on the floor, and were preparing to depart, when Mrs Abthorpe rushed out of the adjoining apartment.

‘What are you doing?’ said she, ‘you will not surely leave him here.’

‘D——n him,’ cried a wretch, ‘he is in our way; if he don’t die quickly, we will kill him.’

‘Oh, do not kill me,’ said the almost expiring soldier; ‘I am not fit to die.’

At this moment major Tupper entered.—Mrs Abthorpe addressed him in a supplicating accent; ‘We can procure the poor soul no assistance,’ said she; ‘he will perish for want of proper applications to stanch the blood.’

‘My dear madam,’ said the major, ‘what can we do? we fear pursuit, and must retreat as fast as possible, and should we take him with us, in our hurry and confusion he will, perhaps, be precipitated into eternity. If we make a safe retreat I will send for him tomorrow.’ He then departed, and colonel Abthorpe being now at liberty, turned his thoughts towards the wounded soldier.

He had fainted; a mattress was laid on the floor, and as they all united in endeavoring to lift him upon it, the motion increased the anguish of his wounds, and recalled his languid senses.

‘Oh, spare me! do not kill me!’ said he, looking round with a terrified aspect.

‘Be comforted,’ said the colonel; ‘you are among friends, who will do all in their power to save your life.’

‘God will reward you,’ said he, faintly.

They now examined the wound, and found, from its depth and situation, that a few hours would terminate the existence of the poor sufferer: however they made long bandages of linen, and with pledgets dipped in spirits, endeavored to stanch the bleeding, but in vain.

‘I am very faint,’ said he.

Rebecca knelt and supported him in her arms, assisted by the weeping Sophia.

‘Can I live, think you, sir?’ said he, looking in the colonel’s face.

‘I fear not,’ was the reply.

‘God’s will be done,’ said he, ‘but I have a long account to settle, and but a short time to do it in. Dear good Christians, pray with me—pray for me. Alas, it is dreadful to die, and with the weight of murder on my conscience.’ Here he grew faint again, and ceased to speak. A cordial was administered—he revived.

‘You see before you, my friends,’ said he, ‘a most unhappy man, the victim of his own folly. My father is a clergyman in the north of England; I am his only child, and have received from him an education suitable to the station in which he meant to have placed me, which was the church; but, alas, I despised his precepts, and joined myself to a set of the most dissolute companions, with whom I ran into every species of vice and debauchery. By repeated extravagance I involved my poor father, who, no longer able to supply my exorbitant demands, remonstrated against my way of life; but I was too much attached to vice to resolve to quit it, and in a fit of desperation, having lost more money than I could pay, I enlisted in a regiment bound to this place. Ah, sir, I have reason to think my conduct shortened my dear mother’s existence, and I have embittered the last hours of a father, whom it was my duty to comfort and support. These are heavy clogs upon my de-

parting soul, but he who witnesseth the sincerity of my repentance, I trust will compassionate and pardon me.'

'No doubt of it,' cried Rebecca, whose heart was almost bursting as she listened to the expiring penitent.

He looked round, and fixing his eyes on Rebecca and Sophia, 'poor girls,' said he, 'you are but young, take the advice of a dying sinner, and treasure it in your memories; obey your parents, never forsake them, and shun vicious company, for had I done this it would have been well for me in this evil day.'

Rebecca's susceptible heart smote her, she hid her face with her handkerchief, and sighed deeply.

'God forever bless you, my friends!' said he, 'I am going, a few pangs more, and all will be over. Oh, may he, whose fatal aim took my life, have it not remembered against him; may the Father of mercy forgive him as freely as I do.'

He then commenced the Lord's prayer, but expired before he could finish it.

'Peace to his repentant spirit,' said the colonel, as he raised his weeping daughter from her knees.

'His poor father,' said she, 'what would he feel did he know this.'

'He felt more,' replied the colonel, 'when the misguided youth forsook the paths of

virtue, than he would, could he even behold him now.'

The heat at this season of the year is intense, and the colonel knew the body of the unhappy soldier must that day be consigned to the earth, yet how to make the grave, or how to convey the corpse to it when made, were difficulties which he could hardly think it possible to surmount, but sad necessity enforced the attempt; he fixed on a retired spot, just by the side of his garden, and began the melancholy task. Rebecca and Sophia with their delicate hands endeavored to assist, and by evening they had completed it.

The faint rays of the setting sun just tinged the summit of the highest hill; the sky was serene, and scarce a breeze was heard to move the leaves or ruffle the smooth surface of the water. Awfully impressive was the silence that reigned through this once cheerful village.

As the colonel sat pensively considering his situation, and thinking how in the decentest manner possible he could render the last sad duties to the deceased, he saw a small fishing-boat, with one man in it, drawing near the shore; he ran hastily down, entreated him to land and assist him in his mournful office.

The body was carefully wrapped in a sheet—it was impossible to obtain a coffin.

‘We have no clergyman,’ said the colonel, ‘but the prayers of innocence shall consecrate his grave.’

He gave the prayer-book to Sophia, she opened it, and with her mother and Rebecca followed the body. She began the service but her voice faltered, the tears burst forth, she sobbed, and could no longer articulate. The colonel took it from her; he was a man of undaunted courage in the day of battle, but here even his heart sunk, and his voice was tremulous; but he recalled his fortitude and finished the solemn rite in a becoming manner.

‘What a day this has been,’ said Sophia, as they were partaking a little refreshment.

‘It has been a heavy day indeed, my child,’ said Mrs Abthorpe, ‘but how much heavier would it have been, had the poor departed been related to us by any ties of blood: had he been a father, a husband, or a brother. Think not of the evils we endure, my dear Sophia, but reflect how much more painful our situation might be than it is, and offer up your thanks to your Creator, that our afflictions do not exceed our strength, and that in this solitary place we enjoy health and serenity of mind.’

‘Ah,’ said Rebecca, mentally, ‘I do not enjoy that serenity, for my mother in affliction, in want, and calling in vain upon her

daughter for comfort, is ever present to my imagination.'

For several weeks the solitude of colonel Abthorpe was undisturbed, and autumn began to advance. He dreaded the approach of winter, as he knew in that inclement season they would feel the want of many comforts they had been accustomed to enjoy; and shut out from all society, how should they procure sustenance? These reflections made him extremely unhappy. He would gladly have gone to the British troops, but had no possible means of conveying himself and family to them, and his heart revolted from the thought of going to reside with the enemies of his sovereign; however they gave him not the choice, for the latter end of October they despatched a party, consisting of a captain, lieutenant, and fifty men, who surrounded the house of the defenceless colonel, making himself, his wife, daughter, and our heroine prisoners, on pretence of his having held correspondence with the enemy.

Mrs Abthorpe was a woman of a delicate constitution. This sad reverse of fortune was more than she could well support; a slow nervous fever preyed upon her frame; nor could the united efforts of her husband, Sophia, and Rebecca, arouse her from the state of torpor and inaction into which she had fallen, cooped up in one single room (for though prisoners they had the liberty

of walking about the place to which they had been conveyed) obliged to perform the most menial offices for themselves, with scarcely the necessaries, and none of the comforts of life, except what was supplied by a few benevolent families, who were friends to the government. It may easily be supposed colonel Abthorpe and his family acutely felt their painful situation, yet he endeavored to support himself with a becoming fortitude. Rebecca and her young lady, in the course of a few months, learned to manage their wheels, which they plied with diligence and dexterity, sometimes they spun cotton, sometimes wool or flax, rising with the lark, and continuing their labors with unremitting industry, till the shades of night prevented their pursuing it. They would then, as the progress of the spring invited them, wander out to a neighboring wood, the borders of which were washed by a narrow arm of the sea; they would sit upon its banks, watching the unstable element as it ebbed or flowed, admiring the rich beauties of the surrounding prospect. Their hearts were innocent, youth, health, and exercise gave them a flow of spirits, and often as they sat would they warble some cheerful air, or in an evening hymn of thanksgiving, lift up their souls to their Creator.

But when the summer was past, and winter in its dread array drew near, when the

pinching blasts of December pierced bleakly through the crevices of their miserable habitation, and there was neither fire or necessary food to alleviate the horrors inspired by the gloominess of the season, then it was their spirits began to flag. Sophia would gaze ardently at her mother, on whose pale countenance sickness and sorrow sat triumphant, and while, with a faint smile of tender affection, she endeavored to cheer her, the starting tear would discover the despondency of her own heart.

It was a cold evening, the snow fell fast, a very small portion of fire glowed on the hearth, and the little light in their apartment proceeded from a small lamp that was placed on a deal table; beside which sat colonel Abthorpe, his head rested on his hand, his eyes fixed in mournful contemplation on the altered face of his beloved wife, who, seated opposite to him, was diligently employed in knitting, while Rebecca and Sophia were spinning, in hopes, by the produce of their labors to increase the small, very small share of comforts they enjoyed.

‘It is very cold tonight,’ said the colonel, casting a melancholy look at the fire.

‘I have felt it colder,’ replied his lady, endeavoring at a smile; ‘besides the room is small, and a little fire warms it.’

‘To be sure,’ cried Sophia, ‘and then, while I am at work I never think of the cold;

but I am afraid of Rebecca; she is more delicate than I am.'

'Your fears are needless, my love,' replied our heroine. 'I should not mind the inclemency of the season, was your dear mother only comfortable.'

'We think our situation hard,' said Mrs Abthorpe, 'what then is the situation of the poor soldiers engaged in the war.'

'Poor fellows,' said the colonel, passing his hand across his forehead, to conceal the rheum that distilled from his eyes.

At that moment the door of their apartment opened, and a stranger entered without ceremony.

The colonel arose, Mrs Abthorpe bowed her head in token of salutation, and the young ladies suspended their work.

The stranger drew a chair. 'You do not seem to be comfortably situated, colonel,' said he, as he seated himself, and cast his eyes round the room.

'No,' replied the colonel, with a deep drawn sigh, 'comfort and I have long been strangers to each other.'

'Mrs Abthorpe looks ill,' said the stranger; 'has she had any advice?'

'The humanity of some friends, sir, have procured her every medical assistance; but, alas! in vain—the malady is seated in her mind.'

'I was inquiring about you the other day,'

said the stranger, 'and was sorry to hear you were so badly supplied with the necessities of life. A plan has since struck me by which you may be relieved from your present distresses, and restored to the ease and affluence you have been heretofore accustomed to enjoy.'

This was at once calling forth the attention of his auditors. Mrs Abthorpe raised her languid eyes to his face, Sophia and Rebecca instinctively drew near, the colonel listened in silence, and the stranger proceeded.

'Our army at present is in want of experienced officers: you do not hold any commission under the king of England.'

'But I have eat his bread, sir,' said the colonel, hastily.

Mrs Abthorpe sighed, and relapsed into her accustomed pensive state.

'If you would accept a commission in our army,' said the stranger, 'your property would be again restored, and ample compensation made for the losses you have sustained.'

The colonel shook his head, and made a rejecting motion with his hand.

'You will be raised to a rank superior to any you have held in the British army, and your name will be immortalized as one of the glorious supporters of American liberty.'

The colonel frowned and was going to speak, but the stranger interrupted him:

‘You will have the felicity of seeing your amiable wife and lovely daughter enjoying again the elegancies of life. Pleasure will once more inhabit their bosoms, and enliven their features.’

The colonel gazed tenderly on his wife and daughter, paused, and seemed irresolute. Mrs Abthorpe read his heart.

‘And what,’ said she, addressing the stranger, ‘are the elegancies of life, when the mind no longer retains its own approbation! It is true, sir, the present change in our circumstances has awakened some painful sensations; but it has not made us unhappy. I do not repine, for, though unfortunate, we are not despicable; our integrity has ever been unshaken, and, I trust, will ever remain so.’

‘True, my love,’ said the colonel, recollecting himself, ‘we will bear the present evils patiently, and hope for better days in future.’

‘But I would have you weigh this matter maturely, colonel,’ said the stranger, ‘before you pretend to decide.’

‘I have weighed it, sir, you will pardon my abruptness, and am determined to reject every offer that would tend to draw me from the loyalty I owe the best of sovereigns;—

and, allow me to say, I consider such offers as insults to my honor.'

'It is well, sir,' said the stranger, rising, 'if your resolution is taken, I will say no more on the subject; but you will please to prepare your family for leaving this place tomorrow. You are to be conveyed twenty miles further into the country.'

'Further into the country, sir!' said the colonel, starting, 'my wife is unable to bear the journey.'

Sophia turned deathly pale, and left the room with Rebecca.

'Do not be uneasy, my dear Abthorpe,' said the amiable wife; 'I make no doubt but He, who, for his own wise purposes, suffers us thus to be afflicted, will endue me with strength of mind and body to bear it as becomes a Christian.'

The stranger walked across the room.— He was a man of feeling, and had very unwillingly undertaken this commission. He was possessed of every virtue that could elevate the human heart. He had been taught to think the cause, in which he was engaged, was a right cause. He was young; his bosom glowed with enthusiastic ardor. Can we blame him? for, though attached to the cause of his country, he was still more so to that of humanity.

'I am sorry—' said he; but a disagree-

able oppression upon the lungs prevented his proceeding further.

The colonel involuntarily took him by the hand—‘And had you, my dear sir, been tempted to desert your country’s cause—what says your heart? Would private interest have triumphed over the spirit of patriotism that animates your bosom?’

‘I have no wife and child,’ said he. The feelings of sensibility could no longer be restrained, but rushed impetuous from his eyes, and, though he was a man of undoubted valor, he did not blush to indulge them. ‘Let those blush,’ said he, mentally, ‘who cannot sympathize with an afflicted fellow-creature.’

‘But suppose,’ said Mrs Abthorpe, laying her hand on his arm (for he had mechanically stopped beside her) ‘suppose, sir, you had a wife who would feel more for your deviation from rectitude, than she would to endure the hardest pangs of poverty and sickness, and who would rather die than see you an apostate to the cause you had vowed for ever to espouse?’

He turned abruptly from her; something that spoke within forbade him to answer.

‘And what have I done,’ said the colonel, ‘that I must leave a place where I have experienced such friendship—such disinterested affection from many of the inhabitants?’

‘You are too near the sea-coast,’ said the

stranger, 'and may hold correspondence with the enemy.'

He averted his eye from the colonel's face, and pretended to consult his watch.— 'It is later than I thought,' said he, endeavoring at indifference in his voice and manner.

'At eight o'clock tomorrow I expect you will be removed. God bless you, my dear madam!' respectfully taking Mrs Abthorpe's hand.

She saw the feelings of his soul depicted in his face, and forbore to increase them by unnecessary complaint.

'The change of air may do me good, sir,' said she, with a smile of complacency; 'for it often happens that what we dread as an evil, in the end contributes to our advantage.'

He gazed on her with a look of reverence and wonder, bowed profoundly, and, unable to articulate another sentence, hastily left the room.

CHAPTER XI.

'AND must we leave this place, my dear father?' said Sophia, coming from a small adjoining apartment, whither she had retired to indulge the tears she was no longer able to restrain: 'must we be separated

from those friends whose generous attentions have lightened all our afflictions?’

‘We must, Sophia,’ said her father, rather sternly, ‘tomorrow morning.’

‘Ah! me,’ said the weeping girl, turning to Rebecca, and resting her head on her shoulder.

‘Do not grieve thus, my dear Sophia,’ said our heroine; ‘for, though separated from your friends, you will still live in their remembrance, and they in yours.’

‘Yes,’ cried Sophia, with a look of grateful rapture, ‘ever while the vital tide nourishes my heart; dear, worthy inhabitants of Hingham, when I forget the friendship that alleviated my parents’ sorrows may that heart cease to beat!’

The next morning, just as the gray dawn began to enliven the east, Mr Abthorpe’s family were called to begin their journey. An open chaise, drawn by a miserable horse, was all the conveyance provided for Mrs Abthorpe, Sophia and Rebecca; the colonel himself was expected to walk. About nine o’clock in the morning they set out, but the roads were so heavy, and the horse so old and lame, that though they had only a journey of fifteen miles to make, they had not completed it at four in the afternoon. The darkness of the night began to envelope every object, when the chaise stopped at a hut that could scarcely be called habitable. Re-

becca and Sophia assisted Mrs Abthorpe to alight; gloomy as was the outward appearance of their destined habitation, the inside served only to increase their horror; it consisted of three rooms, the windows had once been glazed, but were now some parts open, and others mended with wood. One room indeed, was boarded, the others had only the ground for a floor. There were two chimnies large and dreary, in which no trace of fire appeared; all was desolate and gloomy.

It was now quite dark, the colonel had not yet arrived. Rebecca and Sophia felt round the damp solitary rooms for something on which Mrs Abthorpe might sit down, for she was faint and weary from taking no refreshment during their tedious journey, and having been exposed to the intense cold so many hours; but their search was in vain, no seat could be found; they took off their own cloaks, and laid them on the floor: on these she sunk, weak and exhausted, and in spite of her accustomed fortitude, suffering nature wrung from her a few complaints. Rebecca and Sophia knelt beside and supported her—the voice of comfort no longer issued from their lips—their sighs responsive answered hers—their tears mingled as they fell—but all remained silent.

They heard footsteps approach—the colonel's well know voice saluted their ears.

‘Dry your eyes, my dear-girls,’ said Mrs Abthorpe; ‘Let us not increase his sorrows, whose every pang is doubled by our sufferings.’

The colonel entered—some one accompanied him, for they could hear more than one footstep.

‘We shall have a fire soon,’ said the colonel; ‘it is a very cold evening.’

‘But I am well wrapped up, and do not feel it,’ said Mrs Abthorpe.

His heart thanked her, though it refused to believe her assertion.

Just then a third person entered, and threw down an armful of wood, when the person who had accompanied the colonel, produced a tinder-box, and striking a light, discovered to the astonished females the sons of two of their best friends.

Mr Lane! Mr Barker! involuntarily burst from all their lips; but the generous young men would not hear a word of praise or thanks; they soon cheered the solitary mansion with a comfortable fire; in the mean time a small cart arrived with two beds, a few chairs, and some kitchen utensils. From a basket in this cart the young men produced a couple of fowls, some butter, bread, and two bottles of wine, so that in less than two hours, from their first melancholy entrance, our distressed family were sitting in homely wise round an old wainscot-table, before a

large fire, partaking a plentiful supper, while their hearts expanded with gratitude to that good Providence who had thus raised them up friends when least expected.

The next morning the young men exerted themselves to repair the breaches in the windows, and to stop the large crevices in the doors of the house. Having to the utmost of their power lessened their troubles, and rendered them tolerably comfortable, they departed, leaving behind them some meat, bread, butter, cheese, and a small parcel of tea and sugar; but as the last named articles were at that time extremely scarce they could not be so liberal as their expanded hearts led them to wish.

Oh! with what rapture must the parents of these young men have received them after such a journey, to which they had been excited by motives of the purest benevolence; but benevolence was their characteristics.

Blest spirits of philanthropy, the hearts of whom, ere discord shook her baneful wings, and shed her influence over your happy plains, in a state of almost primeval innocence, felt not a pang, but for another's woe, and whose first pleasure was to alleviate the sorrows of a suffering fellow-creature! May the arrows of affliction, with which she has since wounded you, be drawn forth by the hand of sympathizing friend-

ship, and the anguish of them obliterated by the remembrance of your own good deeds.

But this is a theme which carries me from every other. I would request pardon for digressing from my subject, but I know those only will blame me, who never felt the sweet emotions of unbounded gratitude.

But to return—

The habitation, to which colonel Abthorpe had been thus suddenly removed, was situated on the skirts of an extensive wood. The face of the country was rocky and dreary, to which unpromising appearance the snow and ice not a little contributed. There was but one habitation within two miles of them, and that was occupied by people, if possible, more wretched than themselves.

In this dismal situation, with no amusement, but what sprang from themselves, for they had not even the consolation of books, did the colonel and his family pass four wearisome months, during which time they had often no food but coarse Indian bread and potatoes; nor any firing but what Sophia and Rebecca assisted each other to bring in their delicate arms from the adjacent woods, for the colonel himself was a great part of that time confined to the house with the gout, and in their daily excursion to procure this necessary appendage to the support of life in so cold a climate, they had no covering to their feet, which often bled

from the intenseness of the cold, or from incisions made by the rugged path over which they were obliged to pass.

It was the latter end of March, the ice was beginning to dissolve in the warmth of a mid-day sun, when Rebecca, willing to enjoy a short space of uninterrupted reflection, sallied into the woods, unaccompanied by Miss Abthorpe. As she gathered up some scattered branches, and laid them together, her thoughts wandered to her native land. She retraced every event of her past life. 'And where now is sir George?' said she. 'Could he behold me at this instant, how would his generous heart compassionate my misfortunes; but, alas! perhaps I am no more remembered by him, or he considers me as numbered with the dead; and am I not so to him? Then, why should I wish him to retain me in his mind, when, by forgetting me, he may regain that felicity his generous sentiments in my favor had interrupted. No doubt, he is long since married to the lady with whom his mother wished him to unite. Ah! my beloved benefactress,' continued she, sitting down on a large stone at the foot of a spreading pine, 'dear lady Mary, little did you think when I parted from you we were never more to meet! but that anguish of heart would from that hour be the unremitting portion of your Rebecca.'

She then drew forth the picture which,

through all her distress, she had still carefully preserved, and constantly carried in a small purse, in which she had also deposited sir George's letter, and those she had received from her mother. As she opened this precious repository, her mother's writing caught her eye.

'My poor mother,' said she, 'what waves, what insurmountable waves, now roll between us! shall I ever again behold you? or is it my fate here, far distant from my native land, to end an existence, which tho' short, has been marked by variety of sorrow?' Here painful remembrance overpowered her. She rested her cheek on her hand, and as she held the picture in the other, alternately raising her streaming eyes to heaven, and then fixing them on the portrait of sir George.

She was aroused from this painful revery by a deep drawn sigh which seemed to proceed from a person very near her, and, starting, saw a venerable old man standing opposite her, habited in a lieutenant's dirty uniform.

She arose, and tying her bundle of wood together, was preparing to lift it, when the old officer approached.

'It is too heavy for you, child,' said he, 'give me leave to carry it.'

'I have not far to go, sir,' said she.

'Perhaps you are going to the unfortun-

ate colonel Abthorpe's habitation, or can direct me where to find it?"

'I live in his family,' said Rebecca, eagerly, 'do you know him, sir?'

'Alas! no, my dear child; but hearing he was a prisoner at this place, and being myself in the same unhappy predicament, I am going to claim his society, hoping that, as brothers in affliction, we may be enabled to comfort each other: but, surely, I have seen you before, though where or when I can by no means recollect.'

'Your features too,' said Rebecca, 'seem familiar to me, yet I do not think we ever met before.'

They had now reached the house, and depositing their burthen at the door, entered.

'You will pardon me, sir,' said the old lieutenant, advancing to the colonel, 'if unasked, I intrude myself into your dwelling; but hearing there was an officer in this place, I could not resist the desire I felt to become known to him.'

'And by what name am I to know, and thank you for this civility?' said the colonel, placing a chair for his guest.

'My name is Littleton.'

'Littleton!' cried Rebecca, stepping eagerly forward.

'Yes; George Littleton,' said the lieutenant. 'And I have worn his majesty's livery above twenty years.'

‘My name is Littleton,’ said Rebecca.

‘And your father’s name?’

‘Was William.’

‘He is dead then,’ said Mr Littleton, with a disappointed look.

Rebecca’s tears confirmed the suspicion.

‘And did you never hear him speak of a brother?’

‘Yes; but as one long since dead.’

‘Alas! he thought me dead, but I am that brother; nor can I doubt but you are his child, you bear so strong a resemblance to him. My dear girl,’ continued he, embracing her, ‘how my heart bleeds to meet you here, and so badly sheltered from the inclemency of the season.’

A few moments were now devoted to mutual gratulations and mutual condolence.— When the first tumult was a little subsided, Rebecca wished to be informed how it happened that her uncle had been so long supposed dead by her father.’

‘Disappointment and vexation,’ said the old gentleman, ‘drove me from my native country; the loss of a wife and child, whom I tenderly loved, disgusted me with life, and I shipped myself to the East-Indies, whence I hoped never to return.

‘I am several years younger than was your father, and was placed by an old uncle with a wealthy merchant, with whom he

promised to establish me, when I had served my clerkship with honor.

‘My master had an only child; she was not what is usually called a beauty, but she was in my eyes more. Her features were regular; the gentleness of her spirit threw a softness over her countenance, which at once prepossessed every beholder in her favor. Added to the meekness, and forgiving spirit of a Christian, she possessed all the intrepid fortitude and courage of a Roman matron. The innocence of her heart inspired her with unaffected cheerfulness, and a most engaging vivacity was tempered with a modest simplicity.

‘Such was Rosa Benson; when at the age of eighteen she was sent for from France, where she had been educated, to take the care of her father’s house, her mother having been taken suddenly off by an apoplexy. I was just two years older, and could not behold unmoved the innumerable charms that were daily displayed by this engaging girl. She played upon the harpsichord with great taste and execution; had a soft melodious voice, and sung with judgment. Her mind had been carefully cultivated, which rendered her a well informed rational companion.

‘Mr Benson generally spent his evenings abroad, and I frequently passed many hours in uninterrupted conversation with the delighting Rosa. I will not attempt to deline-

ate the various imperceptible degrees by which our hearts became attached to each other; suffice it to say, we felt the power of love mingled with the purest friendship;—nor did we once reflect on the imprudence of indulging our sensibility till awakened from our dream of bliss by Mr Benson informing his daughter, that her hand was solicited by an earl, and that he had given him leave to address her; at the same time he gave her to understand, he did not expect any opposition to his will, and flattered himself he should soon behold her a countess.

‘When Miss Benson informed me of this unhappy stroke, I felt as though annihilated. I threw myself at her feet, and entreated her not to make me one of the most wretched of human beings, by accepting my noble rival. She assured me she had too high a sense of honor to give her hand to one man, while her heart was entirely devoted to another, but still I was unhappy; nor did I cease soliciting the dear girl till she consented to be mine by the strongest of all ties, and by a private marriage I secured to myself, as I then thought, the most permanent felicity.

‘Still the earl continued his assiduities; but Rosa found means to evade her father’s earnest wishes, and a more wealthy woman falling in his lordship’s way, who had no objection to making the exchange of money for

a title, she was, from that moment, delivered from further importunity.

‘About six months after our marriage, it became necessary for Mr Benson to send a person to the West-Indies, with power to settle some business with the merchants there; it was a lucrative employment. He mentioned to my uncle that I might, if I chose, undertake the voyage. My uncle acquiesced. There was no alternative, and I was under the necessity of leaving my wife, whom I could by no means persuade to acquaint her father with our marriage previous to my departure.

‘During my absence I was much surprised at receiving no letters from my dear Rosa; but as I was sensible there might be various causes for this apparent neglect, it only led me to greater diligence in my business, as I knew the sooner it was finished, the sooner I should return to the wife of my choice, the friend of my bosom. At length it was completed, and I returned to my native land, after being absent about thirteen months.

‘Eagerly did I count the minutes while travelling from Deal to London; and when the chaise stopped at Mr Benson’s door, my heart throbbed with such violence that I could hardly speak. I alighted, and ran hastily up stairs; but was much surprised, on entering the drawing-room, to behold a strange lady there, young, handsome, and

elegantly dressed. Mr Benson mentioned her as his wife.

‘And where is my Rosa? said I.’

‘She is not at home,’ replied Mr Benson, coolly; ‘but, come Littleton, take your tea, and then we will go into the counting-house, and talk over business.’

‘Conscious as I was of the near interest I took in every thing that concerned Rosa, I forbore to mention her again, lest the agitation of my mind should be betrayed by my countenance; I took my tea in silence, and then descended with my master to his counting-house, where, in as concise a manner as possible, I gave him an account of the business I had been sent upon, and delivered to him all the bills and other papers I had brought with me from Jamaica; this employed us till near one o’clock in the morning, and, fatigued as I was, I could not but be surprised that my hitherto indulgent master should have no thought of the long voyage and journey I had just arrived from, and that I certainly required rest.

‘When we had entirely finished, he thus addressed me:’

‘I promised you, Littleton, that this should be a lucrative business to you, there (opening a pocket-book) there are bills amounting to two hundred pounds; and now, sir, let me tell you, that you are a knave and a villain, a designing, deceitful scoundrel, who, under

the mask of honor and probity, have robbed me of my daughter, stolen her affections, and encouraged her in disobedience. It is to your arts I owe her refusal of the earl of—, and, had she not been your wife, she would at this moment have been a duchess.'

'I had sat as one petrified during this speech; but on his again calling me by the opprobrious names already mentioned, I at once roused myself and endeavored to answer; but his passion, like a torrent, bore down all before it, and I was obliged to be silent. At length he told me he had disclaimed his daughter, that he had sent her from his house, and would never give her a single farthing; no, not even to keep her from starving.

'But go,' continued he, 'go to her, and may you both, with your brat, starve together.'

'The mention of a child operated on my nerves like a stroke of electricity. 'And where are they, sir,' said I, starting from my seat, 'where are my Rosa and her infant?'

'Somewhere in the country,' said he, 'but I don't concern myself with them, nor do I ever wish to see you or her again. You have disappointed me in my dearest hopes, and I will seek consolation in the company of an amiable woman, who may, perhaps, bring

me children, more dutiful than the ungrateful viper you have married.'

'He then flung out of the room, and I, too much irritated to remain in a house where I had been so ill treated, was preparing to leave it, when the door opened, and one of the house-maids entered, looking carefully round her.

'I am glad you are come, sir,' said she; 'my poor young lady will rejoice to see you.'

'Where is she, Betty?' said I.

'At Windsor,' replied the girl, 'at my sister's, but she has never been well since master was born.'

'I took a direction from the girl, and set off as quick as I could get a chaise.

'It was between five and six when I arrived at Windsor, and having ordered some breakfast, though I had no inclination to eat, I sent for the woman with whom my love lodged, and finding her a discreet sensible person, intrusted her with a letter, to be delivered cautiously to the dear creature, who I found was in a very alarming state.

'In about two hours, I was summoned to the cottage that contained all my treasure; but, good heaven! how shall I describe my sensations at the sight of my wife, scarcely the shadow of her former self—pale, thin; her eyes sunk, heavy and devoid of lustre!

'George,' said she, putting her dear boy into my arms, 'you are come home in time

to receive this pledge of my love, and to close my eyes; but I shall die content, sensible that you will be a kind father to my child.'

'I endeavored to cheer her, and inspire her with hopes which I could not rationally indulge myself. I procured the best medical advice, but all in vain; she grew worse and worse, and expired in less than a fortnight after my arrival in England.

'Previous to her death, she informed me that another more splendid offer of marriage, strenuously urged by her father, had wrung from her the secret of our marriage, and that she was immediately dismissed from her father's house in a most disgraceful manner; that she had written to my uncle, claiming his protection, if not on her own account, for the sake of the unborn infant; but his answer was, that as I chose to marry without consulting him, I might maintain her as I could, for he would never more do any thing for me; and as to her, he thought she must have behaved very ill when her own father had discarded her. From that time he entirely withdrew his favor from me, and though I went to him soon after the death of my wife, I was not permitted to see him.

'About this time your father, who was then an ensign in a marching regiment, was ordered to Ireland. I had not seen him for some years, as he had been stationed at

Plymouth; but could not let him leave the kingdom without taking a personal leave; I therefore left my dear boy with the good woman where my Rosa had lodged, and set off for that place.

‘I had not been with my brother above three days before I received a letter from the nurse, informing me that my boy had been carried off by a convulsion fit the day after I left Windsor. The world now appeared to me a universal blank. I considered myself as a mere cipher, without family, connexion or friends, and possessing but a small portion of worldly goods. I had formed an acquaintance with several officers belonging to one of his majesty’s ships going to China; a desire of roving took possession of my mind. I had, when a boy, been fond of the study of mathematics, and during my voyage to Jamaica had contracted a fondness for a nautical life, I therefore requested to be admitted on board the Triton, and was accepted.

‘In this ship I went to the East-Indies, fully resolved never to visit England again.—This resolution I kept inviolate for many years, always changing into some ship stationed in those parts whenever the one I was in was remanded home. In his majesty’s service I arose by degrees to the rank of lieutenant, and my ambition had led me to hope, during this war, I should have risen

still higher; for the ship I was in being ordered home, and I unable to obtain an exchange into one stationed in India, returned to England, and was soon after sent in a cutter with expresses to the fleet at New-York, whence I was despatched to Boston, where I unfortunately arrived after the evacuation by his majesty's troops, and of course fell into the hands of the enemy. I have been detained a prisoner now nearly two years, frequently removed from one place to another, and every removal is for the worse; but I hear there is now an exchange of prisoners talked of, so I hope to be included in the cartel.'

'But did you never write to my father?' said Rebecca.

'Yes; frequently during the first years of my absence from Europe; but never receiving any answers, owing, as I imagined, to the unsettled life a soldier in general leads, I at length ceased to write. When I was last in England I inquired for him of some of our old friends, and learned that he was married, and had one child; but they could give no information where he was settled, as they had neither seen nor heard from him for many years.'

Rebecca felt a gleam of comfort dilate her affectionate heart at having thus unexpectedly found a relation. 'I am not then entirely unconnected,' said she, mentally, at

the same time laying her hand on that of her uncle, and looking at him with eyes swimming with filial tenderness, excited by the strong resemblance he bore to her father.

‘My dear girl,’ said he, ‘you have found an old uncle who will love you with all his heart, and defend you to the last hour of his existence; but I am as poor, Rebecca, as when I first put on his majesty’s livery. In all my long service I have not picked up above two hundred pounds prize money, and thinking I had no one to take it after me, I have spent it as fast, or, perhaps, sometimes faster than I gained it. But my pay has been running so long, we shall be quite rich when I get home, and you shall call me father, and make up to me the loss of my Rosa and her boy.’

‘I will be your daughter in every sense of the word,’ said Rebecca, affectionately kissing his hand.

The conversation now took a more general turn; colonel Abthorpe was delighted with the acquisition of a friend. They could not think of parting till evening, nor then without a mutual promise of maintaining a frequent intercourse.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN colonel Abthorpe retired to rest, he revolved in his mind what Mr Littleton had said concerning an exchange of prisoners, his wife's declining health had long made him uneasy. He flattered himself was he once removed from captivity, and enabled to obtain subsistence for his family, her mind would be more at ease, and she would of consequence recover her health and spirits. These reflections occupied him all night, and totally banished sleep. At dawn of day he arose, and sat down to draw up a petition, praying to be, with his family, included in the intended exchange. This petition he presented to the General Court. The answer he received was a repetition of the offers of employment in the American army, enforced with the most beneficial and lucrative rewards for his services. These he strenuously rejected, declaring a resolution to die rather than forsake the cause of loyalty. They found it was in vain to increase their offers; he continued unmoved. If he sighed it was in secret, and he waited with an assumed patience the end of his misfortunes, while the most afflictive sensations corroded in his bosom. But when he had almost bidden adieu to hope, when despair seemed to have taken possession of his mind,

then was deliverance nearest at hand, and he received a letter, informing him that he was to be exchanged with his family, by the very next cartel. They were accordingly removed to Boston, and, in company with Mr Littleton, put on board a small vessel, bearing a flag of truce, in which they arrived, after ten days' passage, safe at Halifax.

Here Mr Littleton was immediately employed, and drew on his agent for money to provide himself and Rebecca with necessaries; nor did he withhold part of his little store from colonel Abthorpe, who was really in necessitous circumstances. Mrs Abthorpe's malady had gained too much on her delicate constitution ever to be repelled.—She continued to decline, and, in a few days after their arrival in Nova-Scotia, she sunk to eternal rest. Rebecca exerted herself to comfort poor Sophia; but it was now become absolutely necessary for them to part. Colonel Abthorpe had not the means even of supporting himself and daughter, much less an extra person; besides, Rebecca was eager to revisit England, and see her mother; he therefore furnished her with commendatory letters to several ladies in London. Her uncle provided her a passage, and gave her an order on his agent for the small remainder of all his worldly wealth.

She took an affectionate leave of her dear

Miss Abthorpe, and embarked for her native land. It seemed as though the elements were as eager to convey our heroine in safety home, as they had been perverse and tardy bearing her thence; for on the twenty-eighth day from her leaving Halifax, at the close of the evening, she found herself set down at the door of the Cross-keys inn, in Grace-Church Street, London. She had landed with a widow lady and her maiden sister, who came in the ship with her at Deal, and they proceeded to town in a post-chaise. She remained at the inn with them that night, and the next morning set out in a coach to seek the benevolent friend of Mrs Harris in the borough. She was removed, but Mrs Harris herself occupied the house; Rebecca, therefore, met a hearty welcome, and determined to take up her abode with her till she could hear from her mother, to whom she immediately wrote.

Anxiously did she count the time till she thought it possible to receive an answer.—At length the welcome sound of a postman's rap saluted her ears. She almost flew to the door. The letter required double postage; she paid it without hesitation, and hastily returned to the parlor to examine its contents; but as she approached the candle, what were her feelings to discover it was her own letter returned, with these words written on the outside:

‘Removed to London two years ago.’

‘To London!’ said Rebecca; ‘but what part of London? Gracious heavens! that I should be in the same place with my mother, and yet unable to find her! But, perhaps, I have no mother now,’ continued she, sorrowfully, ‘she has been removed two years; alas! sorrow may have levelled her with the dust long since.’

She then endeavored to recollect some person in her native village, to whom she could address herself, in hopes of gaining information whether her mother had mentioned what part of the town she intended to reside in. At length she recollected the parents of Ruth, who had lived several years a servant in the family, and was with them when her father died. To them she immediately wrote, and as early as she could possibly expect, received the following answer:

‘MY DEAR YOUNG MISTRESS,

‘This comes with father and mother’s kind love to you, letting you know that we are all main glad to hear you are alive, and come home again to old England; for, certain sure, we all thought you had been dead a long while ago; so when father put on his spectacles, and began to read your letter, I thought as how I should have sounded for joy; indeed, and for sarten, Miss Becky,

I would walk a many long miles to see your sweet face. Oh! dear, if you was but as rich and as happy as you are good, and as we all wish you——

‘As to your mother, we are deadly afraid she has made but a poor hand of marrying again, for old Serle was but a shabby kind of body, though he pretended to be so grand, and tried to make folks believe he was a gentleman.

‘To be sure, they did flash away about a month or two after they were married, and Peg Serle had a mortal sight of new clothes, but for all she never looked like a lady.—Father said as how you looked more like one in a linen gown, and your nice curling hair without powder, than she did in her fine silks and satins, and her hair plastered up with grease and flour; but after all they did not hold out so long. Serle did not use your poor foolish mother well; he kept a hussy almost under her nose, and used to be always drinking and sotting, and so the finery all went away by littles an littles, and then they got sadly in debt, and at last went off to London, without letting any body know about it; but cousin Dick was in London last Martinmas twelve months, and he said he saw Mrs Serle go into a house in Westminster, but she looked main shabby, and we never since heard any thing about her.

‘Father bid me tell you, that he read in

the newspapers how that sir George Worthy is married to a great lady; but father says, he could not have found a more better lady than your own sweet self, be the other who she may; and we all thought as how when lady Mary (bless her dear name!) took you to live with her, that we should one day see you come back to the village, lady of the manor; but it can't be helped, marrying and hanging, they say, goes by fate.—Mother and father send their kind love and duty to you, wishing you a good rich husband, and soon; and so no more at present from yours to serve till death.

RUTH RUSSET.'

When Rebecca had finished reading this letter, her mind was in a state of anarchy, better imagined than described. She sat with the letter open on the table before her, her hands folded in each other, her eyes fixed on vacancy.

'Well, what news, my dear?' said Mrs Harris, as she came into the room, and without particularly observing Rebecca, very leisurely stirred the fire as she spoke to her.

'He is married,' replied Rebecca unconsciously.

'Well, child, you were acquainted with that before, I thought.'

'No, indeed; this is the first I have ever heard of it.'

‘Why, how you talk!’ said Mrs Harris, staring at her; ‘to my certain knowledge she wrote you word of it herself.’

‘Who wrote me word of it?’

‘Why, your mother, child.’

‘Oh, my mother!’ cried Rebecca, trying to rally her scattered thoughts, then pausing for a moment, ‘my poor mother,’ continued she, bursting into tears, ‘I fear I shall never see her more.’

There was a wildness in her looks, an incoherence in her manner, that alarmed the compassionate Mrs Harris. She drew a chair, and sat down beside her, took both her hands in hers, pressed them tenderly, but remained silent. This was a conduct more congenial to the mind of Rebecca than the most eloquent harangue could have been. She rested her head on the bosom of her friend, gave a free vent to her tears, and, by degrees, regained a tolerable degree of composure.

When Rebecca had repelled the violence of her first emotions, on finding sir George was really lost to her, her mother’s unfortunate marriage, and its consequences recurred to her mind; she retired to bed, but not to rest; sleep was a stranger to her eyes, and her thoughts were so harassed, that in the morning her heavy eyes, pale lips, and burning hands, alarmed Mrs Harris.

‘Come, come, my child,’ said she, gently

shaking her, 'I must not see you in this way ; you are far from well now, and if you go on fretting thus, I shall have you quite laid up. You must rouse yourself, my dear ; it is very wrong to give way to sorrow for misfortunes that are irremediable. Chance may, perhaps, discover in what part of the town your mother is ; in the mean time you must not neglect your own interest. You have never waited on any of the ladies to whom colonel Abthorpe gave you letters. I will have you dress yourself this very day, and go to some of them. Perhaps you may meet with a situation where, by having your mind constantly occupied, you will have no time to fret yourself to death, which I foresee will be the case if you are left to yourself.'

'Indeed, Mrs Harris, I have no cause to wish for life,' said Rebecca, in a melancholy accent ; 'for in the whole world I have no friend but you and my poor uncle ; him, perhaps, I shall never see again, and, you, I fear, will get weary of such a child of sorrow.'

'Now you are very unkind, Rebecca, to suppose me capable of neglecting you, or being wearied by your complaints. No, my child ; I feel for you every thing friendship and affection can feel for a beloved object ; and it is because I think it necessary to your health that you should be roused from this state of inaction, that makes me willing to be deprived of your society ; besides, my dear,

your mother may be, nay, in all probability, is alive; and, at some future period, you may have it in your power to render her happy and comfortable in her latter hours by your tenderness and filial love; for her sake then, exert your natural good sense, and bear your afflictions with becoming resignation; it is a duty you owe to her, to yourself, and to your Creator.'

'Oh! Mrs Harris,' cried Rebecca, 'pardon my petulance; I see the friendly design of your advice, and will exert myself to follow it.'

She now began to look over her letters, and determined to wait that morning on lady Winterton.

Rebecca's dress was plain and neat in the extreme, yet there was a dignity in her person and manner of address that ever commanded respect; she, therefore, on knocking at lord Winterton's door, was immediately ushered into a parlor, and the servant took the letter to his lady.

The lady was at her morning toilet. She cast her eyes hastily over the letter.

'What kind of a person brought this letter, Thomas?' said she to the man who waited just without the door of the dressing-room.

'A very genteel young woman,' replied the man.

'Well show her into the breakfast-parlor,

and tell her I shall be with her presently. Is my lord up?"

'Yes, my lady, he is just gone down.'

'Well, go, do as I bid you.'

The man departed, and Rebecca was desired to walk into a parlor, where, in his night-gown and slippers, sat a personage, the exact counterpart of lord Ogleby, in the *Clandestine Marriage*.

Rebecca started, and was going to retire.

'Pray, madam,' said my lord, rising, 'do not let me frighten you; my lady will be here directly. Thomas, reach a chair for the young lady.'

Rebecca blushed, courtesied, and took her seat.

My lord eyed her attentively. She felt her confusion increase.

'She is a very fine girl,' thought his lordship; 'I wonder who the devil she is!'

'The weather is very fine for the season, madam,' said he, thinking it was incumbent on him to say something, though, in fact, it had rained incessantly for a week.

'The sun did break out for about an hour this morning,' said our heroine, half smiling, 'but he seems to have withdrawn himself again.'

'He was conscious, madam, that when your beauties were visible to the admiring eyes of mortals, his fainter glories could not be missed!'

‘Heavens!’ thought Rebecca, ‘what a ridiculous old man, with his bombastic compliment: however, I am glad he is old; perhaps his lady will want a person to read to her, or, by cheerful assiduity, otherwise amuse her.’ She had in her own mind, pictured lady Winterton as an elderly lady, perhaps, upwards of sixty years old. ‘In this family,’ thought she, ‘should I be so happy as to be placed, I should be free from the noise and impertinence so frequently to be met with in the families of young people of quality. I dare say they do not keep much company; nay, perhaps, live in the country above half the year. I wish I may suit her ladyship; she certainly wants somebody, either for herself or some of her acquaintance, by her desiring me to wait to see her.’

As Rebecca was indulging these reflections the door opened and a lady entered, in appearance not more than twenty, habited in a very modish undress.

‘Miss Littleton, I presume,’ said she, advancing. Rebecca courtesied.

‘Colonel Abthorpe,’ said the lady, motioning for her to be again seated, ‘has had a very disagreeable time in America. I dare say you are happy to find yourself in England again.’

‘Sincerely so, madam.’

'This,' thought Rebecca, 'is undoubtedly a daughter.'

'The colonel mentions,' resumed the lady, 'that you would wish to engage as companion to an elderly lady, or as governess to some genteel family of children.'

'Either situation would suit me, madam,' said Rebecca; 'and if lady Winterton could recommend me——'

'Lady Winterton wants a companion herself,' said the lady, smiling; 'but, perhaps, her age will be an objection.'

'By no means, madam; I should give the preference to an elderly lady.'

The lady laughed; Rebecca blushed, and feared she had been guilty of some impropriety.

'Why, my dear creature,' said the lady, 'I am afraid that you and I shall never agree, though colonel Abthorpe seemed to think you might prove an acquisition to me; but I am too young for you, so must positively turn you over to my lord; he is more adapted to your taste.'

'Your ladyship must pardon my ignorance,' said the trembling, blushing Rebecca, 'I really had no idea——'

'Hear her! hear her! my dear lord; she had no idea that your senatorial wisdom could have for a wife such an inconsiderate rattle. I would bet a thousand pounds she took you for my papa.'

‘Your ladyship is pleased to display your wit at the expense of good manners,’ said his lordship.

‘Oh, I humbly crave your pardon,’ cried she, with a most bewitching smile, ‘I meant no offence; you know I cannot help other people’s mistakes; for my own part I think you infinitely charming;’ then twisting one of his gray locks round her beautiful fingers, she continued, ‘the snow on the hills, and the icicles pendant from the leafless trees in December, are, in my eyes, as beautiful as the variegated fields and full blown hawthorn in May. I like every thing in its season, and am, moreover, a great admirer of natural curiosities.’

‘Impertinent!’ said his lordship, rising angrily, and quitting the room.

‘Well, now he is gone,’ said her ladyship, drawing her chair near Rebecca, ‘let us have a little serious talk. You cannot suppose that inclination led me to give my hand to that ludicrous piece of antiquity; no, my dear girl, I married him to serve a father whom, next to heaven, I love; and to get from the power of an ill-natured maiden aunt, who had kept me at school for fear I should mar her fortune, and despoil her of all her lovers; for she had a fortune of thirty thousand pounds, and that gave her wizened face and skeleton figure ten thousand charms; she or her fortune had admir-

ers innumerable. I was always with her at the holydays. My lord saw me at the play. Charmed at the idea of getting me married out of the way, she made her will, bequeathing to me all her fortune in case she died without issue.

‘This was buzzed about; her lovers all forsook her; and poor aunty died shortly of a broken heart, in the fifty-ninth year of her age! My father had married this lady’s sister. He was poor; she was the co-heiress of a large fortune; but alas! she knew not that if she married without her guardian’s consent, the whole of her fortune went to her eldest sister.

‘Disappointment and sorrow soon put a period to her existence. My father continued in poverty, but I was committed to the care of my wealthy aunt.

‘At the time I became acquainted with lord Winterton, my father’s circumstances were dreadfully embarrassed. My aunt would not advance a single guinea to keep him from jail. I knew this marriage would place him in affluence, and, at the age of sixteen, gave my hand, promised to love and obey, before my heart knew what love was. I have been married now five years; my temper is naturally cheerful, and I am an enemy to thought; but I have that within me which convinces me I have a heart

alive to every delicate sensation of disinterested tenderness.

‘You may, perhaps, think it odd that I am thus open to a stranger; but colonel Abthorpe, who was the intimate friend of my father, has given you a character which has made me wish to awaken an interest in your heart, that I may have one bosom in which to repose my sorrows, one friend who will pity my frailties.’

Rebecca felt inclined to love this unfortunate young creature, from the first moment she beheld her. A very few words served to settle every preliminary, and it was agreed that the next day she should repair to her new situation.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHEN Rebecca began to feel herself settled in Wimpole Street, she also began to find that she had entered into an entire new line of life. Lady Winterton was extremely gay, saw a great deal of company, and lived in one continued round of dressing, visiting, and public amusements. It was in vain for our heroine to object to accompanying her; she had taken a peculiar fancy to her society, and was never happy without her. Lord Winterton loved gayety, and

an ostentatious display of grandeur, as well as his lady. She was, therefore never contracted in her pleasures, were they ever so extravagant; and the old peer thought himself amply repaid for the most splendid entertainments or elegant presents, by the smiles and good humor of his lady, who, in spite of her caprice and satirical wit, he tenderly loved.

One morning Rebecca had accompanied her friend to an auction, where they had scarcely been seated ten minutes before a very elegant young man approached them, and being introduced to her as Mr Savage, a particular friend of her ladyship's, attached himself to them the whole morning. Rebecca did not observe any thing uncommon in his attentions to lady Winterton, but she thought, as he handed her ladyship to her carriage, she saw him put a folded paper into her hand, which she immediately conveyed to her pocket.

As it drew towards evening, the lady seemed vastly uneasy, especially when she found her lord meant to spend his evening at home: however, after she had taken her tea, she ordered her chariot.

‘Am I not to have the pleasure of your company, Fanny?’ said his lordship. ‘I proposed supping at home, because I heard you were disengaged.’

‘Oh, my lord, I shall be at home again in

about two hours. Miss Littleton and I are only going to call on a sick friend of hers.'

Rebecca started. Lady Winterton gave her a supplicating look, and surprised as she was, she remained silent.

'If Miss Littleton has a wish to visit her friends,' said his lordship, 'the chariot is certainly at her service; but surely, my dear Fanny, you are not obliged to accompany her.'

'Indeed, but I am; and I am sensible the lady will take it very unkind were I to neglect going. Don't you think she would, Rebecca?'

'I think,' said Rebecca, timidly, 'we may both venture to defer our visit till the morning, as my lord is so kind as to spend the evening at home.'

'Ah! that is your good nature, my dear; you would rather offend your friend than lead me to disoblige my husband. But suppose we settle it in this way; I will go and see how the lady is, and you shall stay and engage my lord at piquet. I shall just call at the mantua-maker's in my way home, and be with you again before supper.'

'Your ladyship will pardon me,' said Rebecca, giving her a penetrating look. 'As you are resolved to go, you shall not have to say I am remiss in duty to my friend.—I am ready to attend you, madam,' rising, and ringing for her cloak.

‘For heaven’s sake ! lady Winterton,’ said Rebecca, as the chariot drove from the door, ‘what is the meaning of all this ? You have distressed me beyond measure, by calling on me to assert a falsehood.’

‘Now you are angry with me, Rebecca,’ said the lady, taking her hand ; ‘but pray think no more about it. I could contrive no other method to get away from that inquisitive old man without telling him where I was going.’

‘And surely your ladyship does not wish to go any where, that would be offensive to your husband.’

‘Oh ! my dear girl, you will never forgive me, you are such a prudent creature yourself ; but I am going to meet ——, though, believe me, it shall be the last time. I am going to meet—and take a last farewell of Savage.’

‘By your ladyship’s promising it shall be the last time, I am led to think it is not the first. I could have excused your making me accessory to such an affair ; however, I shall take care not to be liable to be drawn in a second time.’

‘Ah ! Miss Littleton, you have no compassion for a susceptible heart.’

‘Yes, lady Winterton, I have an infinite deal ; I feel for you sincerely if, when your person is united to one, your heart is in the possession of another. Your feelings, mad-

am, are involuntary; your actions are by no means so. I am sensible you may not be able to conquer the weakness of your heart; but you certainly may avoid throwing yourself into situations which may lead to criminality.'

The chariot now stopped; lady Winton alighted; and Rebecca followed her silently into a parlor where Savage was eagerly expecting her.

The ensuing scene, to which our heroine was a witness, though it awakened all her compassion for the lovers, who in years, sentiments, and manners, seemed so suitable to each other, it gave her but an indifferent opinion of her lady's prudence. Savage, from his conversation, appeared a man of strict honor; he did not seem to entertain an idea to the injury of his mistress; but that unfortunate woman, hurried on by the violence of her passion, made a thousand discoveries of her unbounded affection for him, which, with a man of less integrity, might have precipitated her into everlasting infamy.

The promise of returning to supper was quite forgotten. Rebecca reminded her of the hour; she heard her not, and the clock struck twelve before she could bring herself to leave her lover.

During their ride home Rebecca spoke not a syllable, except one or two laconic

answers to her lady's questions. She followed her into the hall, and taking a candle from a servant, wished her a good night, and ran hastily up stairs, leaving lady Winterton to make her excuses to her husband for her breach of promise.

The next morning as she was rising, one of the maids brought her the following note:

‘For heaven’s sake! my dear Rebecca, do not contradict whatever you hear said at breakfast, as you value the peace of

F. WINTERTON.’

Rebecca threw the note into the fire, and went down stairs. Her lord and lady were already in the parlor.

‘And how do you find yourself this morning, my dear?’ said her ladyship. ‘I vow you quite frightened me last night.’

‘Are you often taken in such a strange manner?’ said his lordship, with a look of concern.

‘No, indeed, my lord; I was taken quite by surprise last night, and was very painfully affected. I never was taken that way before, but I felt a return of the disorder this morning.’

‘Indeed!’ cried her ladyship, in appearance much alarmed.

‘Yes, madam; but as a change of air may be of service to me, and your ladyship appears so terrified on my account, I shall beg

leave to retire to a friend's some few miles from town. I shall go directly after breakfast, and will send tomorrow for my trunks.'

'You do not mean to leave us I hope.'

'Yes, madam; it is impossible for me to remain longer with you.' Lady Winterton burst into tears.

'Nay, Miss Littleton,' said his lordship, 'you must not leave us; my poor Fanny will break her heart.'

All to no purpose was it for the lady to weep or her husband entreat; Rebecca remained inexorable, till lord Winterton leaving them, his lady earnestly entreated her to forgive what was past, and she would never see Savage again.

'Do not leave me, Rebecca,' said she, 'you are my guardian angel; without you I shall be inevitably lost!'

This argument prevailed, and Rebecca consented to stay, in hopes of drawing her lady from her unfortunate attachment. The winter was now entirely supplanted by the gay-robed spring, and our heroine began to sigh for retirement, silver streams, and shady groves. Lady Winterton, to oblige her, proposed spending a few weeks at Cheswick, where they had an elegant seat.

It was a charming evening in the beginning of June; the ruddy streaks of the parting sunbeams had given place to a sober gray; the moon with silver crescent shed a

feeble light, and stars, by imperceptible degrees, appeared in the blue expanse of heaven till all was one continued scene of radiant glory. A nightingale, perched on a thorn, was tuning her melancholy pipe, and the zephyrs passed gently over a long canal, wafting on their wings the distant sound of the tinkling sheep-bell, and the rustic shepherd's whistle.

Rebecca had left her lady in an alcove at the bottom of the garden, and wandered into the pleasure ground. The beauty of the surrounding scene had given a soft serenity to her mind, and she sat down to indulge reflections which, if not absolutely pleasant, were far from painful.

She had not sat long before she saw two men gliding among the trees, and proceeding towards the garden. At first she felt rather terrified, but the idea of Savage striking her, she hastened towards the place where she had left her lady. She had hardly got half way before she felt herself seized by a person, who softly bid her not to be alarmed, he only meant to prevent her disturbing an agreeable *tete-a-tete*, to which a friend of his had been invited, and which he was determined should not be interrupted by her.

Rebecca trembled excessively; for, by the voice, and what she could discern of his

features, she discovered the person who held her to be no other than lord Ossiter.

‘Whoever your friend is,’ said she, ‘he can have no business here. Unhand me, sir, or I will alarm the house.’

‘You must cry pretty loud then, my dear, for you are a good distance from it; but stay, have I not seen your face before? Yes, by heavens!’

At that moment a loud shriek from the alcove, and a clashing of swords, made him relinquish his hold, and run towards the place whence the sound proceeded. Rebecca followed as fast as her trembling limbs would permit; but what a scene presented itself to her view! Savage on his knees, supporting the bleeding and apparently lifeless body of lady Winterton, and Ossiter struggling to wrest the sword from her lord, who, foaming with rage, threatened instant death to the betrayer of his honor.

‘Infamous wretch!’ said the enraged husband, when he beheld our heroine, ‘this is your doings, you contrived and winked at their meetings, and most conveniently left your vile friend to entertain her lover while you whiled away your time with that disgrace to nobility! Begone; leave my house this night, thou pest to society! I have long been informed of your scandalous proceedings, but would not believe till ocular demonstration left me nothing to doubt.’

Terrified and distressed as Rebecca was, she could not but wish to stay to afford what relief was in her power to her lady, but this was denied her. She had assisted Savage to bathe her temples with hartshorn, and saw her open her eyes, when the servants entered, took her in their arms, and bore her to the house, where Rebecca was forbidden to enter, and any servant who should dare to afford her shelter, threatened with instant dismissal.

‘What now is to become of me?’ said she, sinking on the ground as the door was shut against her; ‘what next will be the fate of the wretched Rebecca?’

‘Love, affluence, and pleasure,’ said lord Ossiter, endeavoring to raise her.

‘Say rather death and infamy, my lord; my reputation is wounded, my peace of mind destroyed. Oh, that my heart would break, and let me rest forever!’

‘Rest in my arms,’ said he, rudely embracing her. She shrieked.

‘Forbear, my lord,’ said Savage, advancing, ‘this lady has been the friend of my adored Fanny, and no one shall insult her with impunity.’

‘Your humble servant,’ cried Ossiter, ‘I understand you, and have done; only give me leave to inform you, that this pretty immaculate piece of prudery, about four years since, was in a ready furnished house of my

providing, whence she thought fit to elope, and has, I make no doubt, seen a great deal of life since that period.'

Rebecca could hear no more; a sudden chilliness ran through her veins; she respired with difficulty; her head grew giddy; and she sunk into insensibility. When she recovered, recollection retained but faint traces of the past scenes; it seemed like a disturbed dream. 'Where am I?' said she. Lord Ossiter approached the bed-side. 'You are in safety, my angel,' said he, 'only compose your spirits, and nothing shall be omitted that can make you happy.' She turned her head from him, wept, but could not answer.

'You must not disturb her,' said a medical gentleman who had been called in; 'quiet and rest are absolutely necessary to preserve her life.'

'Exert your utmost skill, doctor,' said Ossiter, 'to save her, and we will be guided entirely by your directions.'

'Then leave her to the care of the nurse tonight, and do not attempt to see her before noon tomorrow.'

Lord Ossiter kissed her hand, bowed, and retired.

Rebecca heard the door shut; she raised her head to observe the doctor, and perceived, to her great joy, he was a grave, decent looking man. She made some excuse

to send the nurse out of the room, then taking both the doctor's hands in hers, cried, 'Oh! good sir, if you have any compassion in your nature, show it now to a poor distressed orphan, and save her.'

'My dear child,' said he, 'do not alarm yourself; you are not in any immediate danger.'

'Oh! sir, you mistake me; it is not death I fear, it is dishonor. Alas! I know not where I am; but I fear entirely in the power of a man who will sacrifice me to his unhallowed passion.'

'Then you did not come with him voluntarily?'

'No! no! heaven knows I did not; I was in a state of insensibility.'

An interesting conversation now ensued; the doctor was convinced of Rebecca's innocence, and bribing the nurse to assist, about twelve o'clock they helped the poor sufferer to put on her clothes, supported her down stairs, and carried her in triumph to his own house.

Though lady Winterton had solemnly assured Rebecca she would hold no further correspondence with Savage, her love overpowered every good resolution, and she had seen him several times previous to their leaving London; for what man of gallantry can refuse the request of the woman he tenderly loves, though rigid honor bids him fly her

society ! Fanny, the unfortunate Fanny, entreated another interview ; it was impossible to avoid it, but each one was to be the last.

Lord Ossiter was by no means the bosom friend of Savage ; but he had, by accident, become master of this secret, and was, therefore, requested to accompany him to Cheswick, where he had enjoyed several interviews with lady Winterton before the last fatal one.

Lord Winterton's valet had observed his lady's evening walks, and made the important discovery that she had a lover. He informed his lord ; from that moment her steps were watched. She was discovered in the alcove, Savage at her feet ; her cheek rested on his forehead, her hand upon his shoulder, and tears were streaming from her eyes.

'Turn, villain,' said lord Winterton, 'and defend yourself,' Savage arose, and drew his sword ; the frantic lady threw her arms about him, and received her husband's sword in her own bosom. She fell ; and Ossiter at that moment entering, prevented the death of her lover, who would certainly have fallen a victim to the husband's rage, had not timely assistance arrived.

The gentle, innocent Rebecca, was involved in her lady's crime ; she was supposed accessory to the interviews, and forbade to enter the house, when she fainted as was mentioned above. Ossiter represented

her to Savage as a woman of very light character; and he, unwilling to quit a place where he might hope to hear whether **his** Fanny still lived, suffered that designing nobleman to carry her to the chaise which waited for them, and convey her to the nearest inn. Here he ordered her to be put to bed; sent for a doctor, and having strongly recommended her to his care, retired, after a slight supper, to bed, rejoicing in an accident which had again put in his power a woman whom, though he had given up all thoughts of gaining, he could never entirely forget.

How great then was his surprise when inquiring for her the next morning, he found doctor, nurse and patient, all absconded.—He repaired to the doctor's house, but could not obtain admittance. He cursed the meddling fellow in his heart, vowed revenge on Rebecca, and set off for London.

In the regular, cheerful family of Dr Ryland our heroine soon recovered her health, and, in a great measure, her spirits. She made inquiry concerning the fate of her lady, and learned that, though she had recovered from her wound, she labored under a very ill state of health, which, they feared would terminate in a decline. Rebecca gave a sigh to her hard fate, wished she might conquer her passion, and be prepared

for that peace in another world she had failed of finding in this.

Dr Ryland was a truly benevolent man, but he had a large family, and no great degree of practice, it was therefore not to be expected that our heroine could remain with them long, and in the poor situation she then was, without money or clothes, she could not think of returning to incumber Mrs Harris. She had informed Mrs Ryland that she wished to get a place in some genteel family, where she could render herself useful without much hard labor; that lady inquired among her friends, and learned that the lady of a neighboring justice wanted a young person to get up her small linen, make her caps, bonnets, gowns, &c. and occasionally to take the care of the family when the lady was out. Rebecca joyfully waited on Mrs Penure; the kind Mrs Ryland accompanied her, gave her such a character as she deserved, and had the pleasure to find she entirely suited the lady's plan. The salary was but small, but Rebecca had but few wants to supply; to be neat was now all she required, indeed it was all she could henceforth expect. The doctor advanced a few guineas to get her a change of clothes, for she had sent repeatedly without effect for her trunk from lord Winterton's; and in the course of a week from the time she waited on the lady, Re-

becca became an inmate in the family of the worshipful justice Penure.

Jacob Penure had, from a very low station in a reputable tradesman's family raised himself, by indefatigable industry, to the confidence of his master, and a share in his business, at the age of twenty-three. The fair Miss Abigail Prune, who had, in the younger part of her life, served several ladies in the quality of waiting-woman, but who now kept her brother's house, cast on him the eyes of affection. Miss Abigail was, to be sure, rather past her prime, having seen forty seasons revolve and noted their various change, without the least hope of ever changing her own maidenly condition to the more honorable one of wife.

Mr Jacob was a comely young man. She reviewed her own countenance in the glass; she could not perceive the traces made by the hand of time. She was above the middle size, extremely thin, and had a shape, not 'small by degrees, and beautifully less;' but so exactly straight, that it was impossible to perceive any difference between the bottom and the top; and instead of that roundity, which constitutes elegance in the form of a woman, her waist was as perfectly flat as if she had been pressed between two boards. Her arms were long; her hands large, hard, and bony; her face was round, but it was that kind of roundness that

expresses insignificance. The small remains of teeth she possessed might be termed beautiful in some parts of the world, for they were of a jetty hue; and from her hollow sockets, over which could be seen scarcely the trace of brows, twinkled two extremely small black eyes. The tip of her diminutive nose was elevated; and her complexion might have rivaled the tints of the most beautiful orange lily.

Such was the person of Miss Abigail.—We will leave her accomplishments and temper to speak for themselves.

Mr Jacob Penure knew his own interest too well to think of slighting the maiden's advances. She had five hundred pounds in her own possession, the accumulated savings of nearly twenty years' servitude; besides, her brother had no children, and he had much money. Mr Prune was far from displeased with his sister's choice. Penure was an attentive, industrious young man; he made him equal partner with himself, and in about fifteen years they found themselves in possession of a very handsome fortune. At this time the old gentleman died. All his possessions devolved to his sister, and Penure resolved, though much against his wife's opinion, to leave trade and retire into the country. Here he was chosen justice of the peace, and by his integrity and gentleness in the execution of his office, gained the love

of all who knew him. He was a humane, friendly character; but he stood in fear of his wife.

The morning after Rebecca's arrival, the breakfast things removed (for she was to eat at their table) Mrs Penure desired our heroine to accompany her up stairs.

'I am mighty glad,' said the lady, sitting down by a large old fashioned case of drawers, and taking an enormous bunch of keys from her pocket, 'I am mighty glad to have met with a young person like you, who can make me up a few smart things. I love to be genteel, and wear as good things as my neighbors; but really it is so expensive to have any thing done at the milliner's, and if one gets any journey-women to come home, they always ask for as much again stuff as they want, and steal the half of it. Now I do hate to be cheated; I don't mind giving away a bit of riband or gauze that is left; but it provokes me to have it taken away in a sly manner.'

During this harangue, she had pulled from her drawers an immense quantity of yellow washed gauze, old muslin, and thread lace, that bore the strongest marks of antiquity. She admired the cap our heroine had on, and wished to have one made like it. But among the medley of trumpery she had displayed, Rebecca could not select any thing fit for the purpose; besides, our heroine's

head, though neat and plain, still retained an air of fashion. Mrs Penure's lank black hair was combed in the most exact manner over a roll, and drawn up as tight behind as possible. How then could the same cap suit them both? However, an attempt must be made. The lady assured Rebecca that her lace, muslin, &c. were very valuable, and insisted on not only one, but several caps being produced from those materials; at the same time she opened a cabinet in which were arranged, rolled in the neatest manner round cards, every riband she had ever had in her possession. 'See, young woman,' said she, exultingly, 'here are variety of ribands; take your choice; let my caps be trimmed handsomely, but don't let any be wasted; I hate waste, so, if you can avoid it, don't cut them.' Rebecca could not suppress a smile at the solemn manner in which this treasury of old fashioned, dirty, faded ribands, was committed to her charge. However, she promised to exert her abilities to please, and was beginning to form a cap, but her mistress had not yet done with her. 'I suppose,' said she, 'you will want linings and wire; besides, you will not be all day making two or three caps. I want a bonnet or two made, and my best cloak fresh trimmed.'

'I am afraid I shall not be able to do all in one day, madam.'

‘Well, you must do as much as you can, child; don’t be idle, I hate idle people. I hope you don’t love reading?’

Rebecca hesitated; she would not utter a falsehood. ‘I think it an agreeable amusement; but I will not neglect my business.’

‘No, indeed, I hope not; reading is the ruination of all young people. I never read a book in my life but the Bible and the Housekeeper’s Assistant. I was continually studying to make the most of my time, and how to save or earn a penny.’

A fresh cargo was now displayed to the wondering eyes of Rebecca, of old mode, white sarcenet, skeleton wires, and blond lace, out of which she was desired to produce a smart bonnet or two.

‘It is impossible, madam,’ said she, ‘utterly impossible; the bonnets worn now are so different from what were worn ten years since. You must, indeed, madam, afford yourself new materials to make a genteel bonnet.’ Her arguments were vain; all she could obtain was a yard of mode, and four yards of riband, while Mrs Penure declared she was leading her to extravagance, and that the bonnet must last her seven years.

It is impossible to give a correct idea of our heroine’s sensations, when this miserable woman, out of ostentation, displayed to her the treasures of her wardrobe. Here were gowns, petticoats, nay, even stockings

and linen that she could no longer mend or wear, carefully laid by! Her narrow soul could not even expand itself, to give to others what she could no longer use herself.—The very wire that came out of old caps was twisted up, and kept in a box devoted to that purpose; hats that bore the date of twenty years by their fashion; old stays, shoes and gloves, all were preserved, though scarcely worth acceptance by the poorest person.

Her housekeeping was of a piece with the rest; every thing was under lock and key; bread and small beer were the only things to which the servants had free access. Her table, it is true, was well supplied; but it was ostentation, not liberality, occasioned it. Her female visitors were seldom asked to take more than one glass of wine after dinner; for when she had taken half a glass herself, she would return the stopper to the decanter and cry, ‘I never allow myself more.’ This was the signal, and the wine was immediately removed, when she would say, ‘But, perhaps, ma’am, you would have liked another glass?’

It could not be expected, in such a family, our heroine would be happy; she endeavored to be content, but the effort was vain. Mr Penure saw she was far superior to the station she was in; he pitied her, but he could do no more without incurring the

anger of a woman whom he had been accustomed to obey, and dreaded to offend.

It happened one afternoon, when his lady was gone to pay a visit of ceremony (a thing not very customary with him) the justice took his tea at home. Rebecca was summoned to the parlor to make it; but, alas! Rebecca could produce only a tea-spoonful of black tea, and a very small quantity of sugar.

‘Why, sure child, you are not allowanced in tea and sugar?’ said he, with a look of displeasure.

‘There is a plenty for me, sir,’ said she, affecting a smile, ‘and—’

‘By heavens!’ said he, stamping with passion, ‘you shall make no excuse for her; confound the stingy narrow-hearted—’

‘Hold, sir, I beseech you,’ cried she, ‘you quite terrify me!’

‘I am sorry for it, child,’ said he; ‘but to think that my wife should dare treat you thus, *you*, who are every way her superior, and who, if I mistake not, was born to be served by others, not to be a servant yourself!’

‘You are mistaken, sir,’ said our heroine, her eyes falling as she spoke, ‘indeed, you are mistaken. I am a poor orphan, without friends or connexions, and have only to lament that my education has been superior to my fate. My birth was humble, and, I trust,

my heart is humble; but my feelings are sometimes more than I can bear.'

The justice rang the bell; he wished to hide his emotions.—'Get me some tea and sugar,' said he, giving half a guinea to a servant who entered. He then drew his chair toward our heroine, took one of her hands and told her, he felt inclined to prove himself her friend, if she would direct him by what means to do it.

'Be not alarmed, my lovely girl,' said he, 'though my eyes acknowledge you beautiful, my heart only feels for you as for a sister or a daughter. If you can venture to make me your friend, confide in me, and trust to my honest intention; I will serve you to the utmost of my power.'

During tea Rebecca had disclosed to her master the chief incidents of her life, veiling only those which concerned sir George.—Time had passed unobserved. The justice had drawn forth his purse, and putting ten guineas into the hand of Rebecca, entreated her to accept them as the gift of a father.—She strenuously opposed the liberal donation. He had taken her hand, and closing it with the money within it, held it while he was speaking, when the door opened and Mrs Penure stood before them. The justice started, and dropped Rebecca's hand. The money fell to the floor.

The rage of Mrs Penure inflamed her fea-

tures, and shot from her eyes; she could not speak, but shrieking in a terrific manner, flew at Rebecca, and would have made her feel the weight of her tremendous hand, had not her husband stepped between them. She recovered her speech; then poured a volley of reproaches upon him.

‘Profligate wretch!’ said she, ‘vile, ungenerous villain! Is it thus my tenderness and condescension in making you my husband is repaid? Is my money to be squandered on your painted Jezebels, that you bring into my house to dishonor me? Oh! my unfortunate lot! Must I be beggared by an ungrateful wretch? Yes; I see all my property will be wasted, and I shall go to the workhouse.’ Here her tears broke out, and, what with sobbing and screaming, she became unintelligible. Rebecca would not stoop to vindicate herself. She retired to her room in silence, and soon after received a message from her mistress to leave the house, who, at the same time, made her ill behavior a plea for not paying her wages, though she had been in the family above four months. As she was going out at the gate to seek the London coach one of the servants put a folded paper into her hand. On opening it she saw not the ten guineas, but a ten pound note with these words:

‘I know you have not been paid; accept this as a small return for your services.—

God bless you, and make your happiness equal to your desert!

J. PENURE.'

Rebecca was grateful for this little supply of cash, for she was almost entirely destitute, and stepping into the stage, proceeded to London.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE coach sat Rebecca down in Piccadilly; it was quite dark. She thought it was best to go immediately to Mrs Harris's, and determined to take a coach for that purpose. As she stood waiting for her trunk to be taken from the boot, two genteel young men passed her, one of whom turning round, and regarding her attentively, said, 'It is her, by heavens!' and flew towards her. Rebecca turned suddenly round, and discovered the features of sir George Worthy.

'My angelic Rebecca!' said he, folding her in his arms, regardless of the place where they stood, 'do I once more behold you? Do I, indeed, clasp you to my breast, or is it an illusion?'

'Sir George,' said she, struggling to free herself from his embrace, 'I rejoice to see

you well; but know not what I have done to deserve this insult.'

'Who shall dare insult you, my adorable girl! I have found you after such a long separation, when I thought you lost forever, and we will never part again.'

'For heaven's sake let me go, sir George! Why am I thus detained? Are you not married?'

By this time a crowd had gathered round them. An old sailor seeing a woman in distress, rushed forward, and struck sir George a blow that made him relinquish his hold. She sprang from him, and forgetful of her trunk, ran hastily down St James Street.—When she had reached the bottom she stopped to recover breath, and then proceeded slowly down Pall-Mall.

A poor, miserable looking object, whose emaciated frame was but thinly sheltered by a tattered mode cloak (for gown she had none) from the nocturnal damps, supporting her feeble steps by holding by the iron rails before one of the houses, in a weak, tremulous voice entreated charity.

Rebecca never turned aside from the supplications of misery. She stopped and put her hand in her pocket.

They stood immediately under two large lamps.

'Merciful heaven!' cried the poor mendicant, laying her cold hand on the one R^d

becca had extended with relief, and gazing ardently at her, 'Rebecca! my child! do you not know me?'

Our heroine looked intently on the pale visage of the object before her; misery and sickness had somewhat altered it, but she saw it was her mother. The feelings of a daughter rushed impetuously over her heart. She sunk on her kness upon the pavement, and clasping her parent in her arms exclaimed, 'Oh, my mother! my dear distressed mother!' and burst into an agony of tears.

When the tumult of their feelings was subsided, Rebecca thought of calling a coach, but where were they to drive! She could not think of taking her mother to Mrs Harris's; they, therefore, drove to a street in Westminster, where Mrs Serle had lodged, and were fortunate enough to find an apartment empty. Here their mutual embraces and endearments were again renewed. Rebecca wept for joy of having found a parent whose future life she would endeavor to render happy, and Mrs Serle shed tears of contrition for having once treated unworthily so good a daughter.

She informed Rebecca that after they had left Lincolnshire, Serle commenced gamester, sharper, and swindler; that her little boy died in infancy; that Serle's daughter went on the town, and became an abandoned profligate; and that at last overwhelmed

with poverty and disgrace, Serle himself had died in the Fleet Prison, leaving her neither clothes, money, or friends. Her annuity had been long since sold, and she must have perished, had she not providentially met with her daughter.

When Rebecca viewed her mother's tattered garments, and thought of getting her more comfortable clothing, her own trunk recurred to her memory. 'I hope it is not lost,' said she, 'and it is lucky what little money I possess is in my pocket.'

Her mother informed her that there was some decent apparel at a pawn-broker's in the neighborhood, and Rebecca, having received instructions how to proceed, went out in order to get it; but what was her astonishment, on opening the parcel when she had brought it home, to see a gown made of a piece of Indian chintz, which she remembered to have had in her trunk when it was sent into Lincolnshire, with a muslin apron and several other things which she equally knew to be her own.

'Gracious heaven!' said she, dropping the parcel from her hands, and fixing her eyes on her mother.

'What is the matter, my dear?' said Mrs Serle; 'that was a gown given me by poor Serle; it had been bought for his first wife.'

'It was mine,' said Rebecca, in a firm voice; 'if he told you it was his, he told a

falsehood; it was in the trunk I lost four years ago.'

An explanation now took place, which convinced Mrs Serle what a villain she had chosen to succeed the worthy Mr Littleton; but our heroine would not suffer her to make any painful retrospects, or to accuse herself. she poured the sweet balm of affectionate consolation into the bosom of her mother. She forgot her own sorrows, and seemed to have no wish but to render her parent the like forgetful of every past disagreeable occurrence.

The next morning she went to the house where the stage had stopped in Piccadilly, to inquire for her trunk.

'The old gentleman took it away with him,' said one of the waiters, 'and paid all expenses;' for Rebecca, in her fright the preceding night, had forgot to pay her fare to town.

'What old gentleman?' said she, surprised.

'Why, the old gentleman who knocked the young man down that was so rude to you. He read the directions on the trunk when it was taken from the boot, swore he was your uncle, and insisted on having it.— As he offered to pay all expenses the coachman did not refuse, and both he and the young man went off together to search for you, but returned in about an hour, and left word if you should call this morning, for me

to tell you, you might hear of your trunk at No. 46 Bedford-Square.'

'That is lord Ossiter's,' said she, scarcely able to respire.

'And moreover,' said the man, 'the young gentleman told me, if I could find where you was gone, or could bring him to a sight of you, he would give me ten guineas, and so, seeing as how you are here, we had better take a coach and go together.'

'No,' said she, struggling to suppress her emotions, 'no, I cannot go just now; in the afternoon it will be more convenient. I will just step back to my lodgings, and return to you again by two o'clock.'

The man was satisfied. Rebecca tripped hastily out of the house, called a coach, and drove home. During her little ride, her mind dwelt on the singularity of the circumstance. She had just heard that the man, who rescued her from sir George's insults, had gone away with him, had taken her trunk, and directed her to find it at lord Ossiter's. It was an inexplicable riddle; he had called himself her uncle, but she knew she had but one uncle, and he was abroad in the navy. She was certainly fortunate in escaping a snare, which she had no doubt was intended to trepan her. Lord Ossiter had, perhaps, represented her to sir George as an abandoned creature, devoid of virtue or principle; and that gentleman, once so

esteemed, so respected, was now considered as one who, believing her lost to honor, would join his lordship in any stratagem to decoy her into his power.

Full of these ideas, she told her mother she would immediately remove from the apartments she then occupied, fearing she might have been watched home, and sir George would be directed where to find her.

‘Alas! my dear mother,’ said she, ‘I am sensible of my own weakness. I hope I love virtue as well as women ought; but I know I love sir George, and though he is the husband of another; though reason, religion, honor, all plead against my passion, still, still it is so engraven on my heart, that, to eradicate it, I feel it totally impossible. Can I then answer for my own fortitude? I fear not. I might sink under powerful temptations; let me then fulfil my duty and avoid them.’

Her mother approved and strengthened these resolutions; and, having but few things to put together, in less than two hours they were in new lodgings near Millbank, Westminster. Here Rebecca sunk under fatigue of body, and agitation of mind she had undergone, and a fever ensued, which brought her almost to the grave. The strength of a good constitution at length combatted the violence of the disorder, and she began to recover her strength, when her mother was

attacked with one more alarming; this was the small-pox, which, to a person of her age, was expected to be fatal.

Ten pounds was all the worldly wealth Rebecca possessed when she met her mother; but ten pounds in a house of sickness would last but a short time; she, therefore, on examining the contents of her purse when her mother sickened, found it contained but fifteen shillings, and there was a doctor's bill to pay. It was also necessary his attendance should be continued to Mrs Serle, her life being in imminent danger. During the first ten days of her mother's illness, Rebecca hardly left her side, denying herself almost the necessaries of life in order to make the most of her little store; but on the fourteenth day she was pronounced out of danger, and that good nursing and nourishing food was all that was necessary to her restoration.

'Alas!' said Rebecca, 'I have no possible means of procuring those necessary comforts.' She was stooping as she spoke, to take some gruel from the fire, the pin of her handkerchief dropped out and the picture of lady Mary swung forward against her hand.

Rebecca gazed at it mournfully. 'True,' said she, 'it is set in gold, and might afford a temporary supply; but, then is it not the portrait of my adored benefactress? And does it not also contain the semblance of the

only man I ever did or ever can love? But, alas! what right have I to talk of love? Is he not already married? And were he not, have I not given a solemn vow never to listen to his addresses? Foolish, foolish Rebecca! why dost thou nourish a passion that must be forever hopeless!

She was returning the picture to her bosom, when it struck her that she might, perhaps, get the miniatures carefully taken out, and dispose of the gold in which they were set. 'If so,' said she, 'I may comfort my mother, and yet preserve the respect due to the portrait of lady Mary.'

Rebecca was so pleased with the project of raising a supply of money from the gold, that she told her mother she would go out for half an hour and breathe the fresh air, as she found the confinement she had suffered rather impeded her returning strength. When she was out she thought, by extending her walk, she should feel herself refreshed; she therefore crossed the Park, and going out at Spring-Garden gate, stopped at an eminent goldsmith's in Cockspur Street, and requested him to take the pictures carefully out and purchase the setting. The man had just taken it in his hand, and was admiring the neatness of the workmanship, and the curious contrivance of the spring, when a chariot stopped at the door, and a beautiful young lady immediately entered. The mas-

ter of the shop held the picture open in his hand, while he received the lady's orders concerning a pair of bracelets. The portrait caught her eye: 'Bless me,' said she, 'pray whose is it? It is so like a person whom I know.'

'It belongs to this young woman, madam; she wishes to sell the gold without the pictures.'

The lady had not before observed Rebecca; but now her pale, but beautiful, interesting countenance struck her.

'It is a pity to have them unset,' said she, 'will you part with it altogether? I will give you twice the value of the gold.'

'I cannot, indeed, part with the portraits, madam; one is a much valued friend, long since dead, and the other——' A pale vermillion crossed her cheek, and she hesitated.

'Aye, that other,' said the lady; 'I never saw any thing more like than that is to a particular friend of mine; and even the features of the lady seem familiar to me.'

'Will you buy the gold, sir?' said Rebecca.

'No,' cried the lady, 'he shall not buy it. If you will not part with it altogether to me for twice its value, I am certain, (pardon the remark,) but one motive could lead you to wish to dispose of the setting.' As she was speaking, she had taken several guineas out of her purse, and wrapped them in paper.—
'You shall call upon me, if you please, to-

morrow morning,' continued she, presenting our heroine a card, under which she slipped into her hand the paper with the money, and, without waiting for an answer, she tripped out of the shop. Rebecca was motionless; nor did she think of looking at the card, till the master of the shop returned from seeing the lady to her carriage.

'I am glad you were so lucky,' said he, 'as to excite the notice of that lady; she is an amiable woman, and may prove a valuable friend.'

'Lady Chatterton,' said Rebecca, reading the card.

'Yes,' continued he, 'she was lady Eleanor Harcourt, only daughter of the late earl. She has been married about three years. A most extraordinary circumstance happened about that time; she had been from a child designed for her cousin sir George——'

Just then a carriage drew up, several ladies of fashion demanded the jeweller's attention, and Rebecca, thinking her mother might want her attendance, left the shop—not without wishing she could have heard what sir George the lady was designed for, as that was a name she never heard mentioned, but she felt interested, and found it impossible to suppress the emotions of her heart.

Rebecca was truly grateful for the unexpected bounty she had received, and return-

ed home fully resolved to wait on the benevolent lady, and return her those thanks her astonishment prevented her expressing at the time: but on the morrow her mother was so ill it was impossible to leave her, and for several succeeding days it rained continually: however, at length a fine morning presented, Mrs Serle was greatly recovered, and Rebecca, dressing herself as neatly as the very limited state of her wardrobe would allow, proceeded to St Alban Street.

On knocking at the door, she was informed that lady Chatterton was gone out for a morning ride; but that, if she was the young woman her ladyship had met at the jeweller's, she was desired to wait till the lady returned.

Rebecca was pleased with this little mark of attention, and was shown into a small parlor, where a child of about eleven years old, was practising the piano-forte.

The child stopped on her entrance, and, starting from her seat, advanced a few steps towards Rebecca.

‘Do not let me interrupt you, Miss,’ said our heroine.

‘Oh! but I am sure I cannot play, ma’am,’ said the child: ‘indeed I cannot; I had much rather look at you. And pray ma’am do not think me rude if I ask you if your name is not Rebecca Littleton.’

‘That is my name,’ said the astonished Rebecca.

‘I knew, I was sure, it could be no other,’ said the child, throwing her arms round our heroine’s neck; ‘but you have forgot me—you do not remember your Lucy Ossiter.’

‘Miss Ossiter!’

‘Yes, your own little girl that loved you so dearly, and almost broke her poor heart when you went away: but you shall not go away again, Rebecca; my dear aunt will not let you go: I know she will not.’

‘What aunt, my dear?’

‘Why, aunt Eleanor: I live with aunt Eleanor now. Papa and mamma are gone to France, and brothers are at school; so uncle George—Oh! dear, Rebecca, I have got so much to tell you about uncle George. I am sure aunt will be very glad to see you; uncle and she are gone out together.’

‘Good heaven!’ thought Rebecca, ‘then I am in the very house I most wish to avoid.’

No wonder her ladyship said she knew the picture; but now is my only time for avoiding a painful interview with sir George, who has, no doubt, though it did not strike me before, succeeded to his uncle’s title on his marriage with his cousin. Honor, gratitude, all unite to urge me immediately to quit this place. Lady Chatterton has extended towards me the hand of benevolence; nor will I repay her by throwing myself in

the way of her husband, who, from his behavior when we met accidentally, has convinced me he still entertains an improper regard for me.'

'As my lady is not at home, my dear Miss Ossiter,' said she, 'I will call another time.'

'Well, then, let it be soon my own Rebecca; say you will come again tomorrow.'

Rebecca tenderly embraced the affectionate child, and having given her a kind of half promise to see her soon again, hastily left the house.

'Every thing,' said she, 'conspires against me. I never find friends but some cross accident prevents my reaping any benefit from their kindness: misfortune seems to be the only portion allotted for me in this world, and patience and resignation my only comforters. But I will not complain: I have been unexpectedly relieved when almost in despair, when every earthly friend had apparently forsaken me; and, I trust, I shall be supported by the same beneficent Power, as long as he thinks proper to lay the burthen of life upon me.'

As she walked along, indulging these reflections, it struck her that she would go to her uncle's agent, and inquire when he had heard from him, and whether the old gentleman was soon expected in England. But when she got to the place where he used to reside, she found he was removed to a dis-

tant part of the town; nor could the people who then occupied the house, give her a proper direction to find him.

‘Now every stay is gone,’ said Rebecca, as she pursued her way homeward; ‘but I thank God, I feel my health returning, and I shall be enabled to obtain, by industry at least, the necessaries of life for my mother and self.’

CHAPTER XV.

WHEN sir George Worthy left England, in order, if possible, to banish from his remembrance Rebecca Littleton, he had, previous to his departure, visited his cousin Eleanor, and informed her of the state of his heart.

‘I esteem you, Eleanor,’ said he; ‘but I do not love you as a man ought to love the woman he takes for his wife. To be candid, my heart is in possession of another.’

‘And to be equally candid, dear George,’ replied the lady, ‘mine is exactly in the same predicament; yet I do not know how we shall avoid making each other wretched, for my father positively swears I shall have you or be a beggar, and my poor swain has neither name or fortune to recommend him.’

‘I mean to be absent two years,’ said sir George, ‘that will give you a short reprieve.’

I will write to you often, and if at any time I can be of service to the man of your choice, do not hesitate to command me.'

In the earl of Chatterton's family was a young man, nearly of the same age with Eleanor: he was a foundling, and had been brought up and educated by his lordship in the style of a gentleman, and, when at a proper age, presented with a commission.

Oakly, which was the name the earl had given him, from having found him one morning at the foot of an oak in his park, wrapped in a mantle, but without any other clothing. Oakly was a youth of strict honor, and his heart overflowed with gratitude to his benefactor, whom he considered in the light of a father; but, in spite of honor, gratitude, and innumerable resolutions to the contrary, he loved lady Eleanor, somehow or other acquainted her with his passion, and found himself beloved in return.

Things were in this situation when sir George left England, and in this situation remained when a letter from Eleanor summoned him to return, when he had been absent about eighteen months. The earl was ill, felt himself daily declining, and wished to see his daughter married before he died. He obeyed the summons in haste.

Oakly was almost distracted. 'But what am I,' said he, 'that I should aspire to the hand of my patron's daughter?—an outcast,

a foundling, without family or name, dependant on his bounty even for the bread I eat. No; I will not impede her union with a man every way her equal, who possesses honor, and goodness of heart, and will do justice to her virtues. I will leave England.'

Unable to deliberate on a subject where inclination and reason were so much at variance, he flew to the earl, and solicited an exchange into a regiment destined to America; 'Let me gather laurels in the field of battle, my dear sir,' said he.

The earl loved him tenderly. He pressed to know the cause of this unexpected application, and refused to exert his interest in Oakly's behalf until he was informed.

'I love a woman of family and fortune,' said he. 'I have some reason to think I am not indifferent to her, and, knowing my unfortunate situation, I wish to avoid doing a dishonorable action.'

'You will never act dishonorably, Oakly,' said the earl, 'and this conduct is a proof of it. Who is the lady?—inform me—I will speak to her friends in your favor, and give you a genteel fortune.'

'Oh! my generous benefactor,' cried Oakly, 'indeed it is impossible; her parents never will consent. I dare not name her.'

'Come, come, you are too diffident: I am sure there is no family, of the least discernment, but would think themselves highly

honored by the alliance. Come, who is the paragon?"

'You must pardon me, sir; I should entirely forfeit your friendship.'

'You will undoubtedly forfeit it by this unkind reserve. I am willing and able to serve you, Oakly; but if, by your obstinacy, you put it out of my power——'

'Do not call it obstinacy.'

'By heavens! Oakly, I love you as my own child; only tell me how to make you happy, and I will do it, though it cost half I am possessed of.'

'Ah! sir, I fear, when you know——'

'Know what?' cried the earl, impatiently.

'That I love lady Eleanor.'

'Love Eleanor!' cried he, emphatically; 'then your suit is indeed hopeless.'

Oakly's heart sunk within him.

'You are a noble boy, though,' said the earl, 'and from this moment I hold myself bound, by a sacred oath, never to suffer you to know the want of a friend. Eleanor has, from her childhood, been designed for her cousin George; indeed, my late sister and myself entered into a solemn engagement, that whichever outlived the other should see this union completed; that now is my task. If it is absolutely necessary to your peace to leave England, I will procure you the necessary exchange; but I wish, my dear Oakly,

you could conquer your passion and remain with us.'

'That is not in my power, sir,' replied he; 'to be employed in actual service is now the only wish I have to make.'

The earl did not mention this conversation to either his daughter or sir George, and Oakly carefully avoided an interview with Eleanor until he was really appointed to a company of foot that was expected to go to New-York in the course of a few weeks. He then, having made the necessary preparations for joining his regiment, took a tender leave of her, assuring her it was his hope to ensure her felicity, by banishing from her sight a person who had stepped between her and her duty, and who would rather die than have it said he had basely stolen the daughter of the man to whom he owed every enjoyment, nay, almost life itself.

'Tis all in vain,' said Eleanor, 'I can never love sir George; nor do I think even the command of a father I love and revere can lead me to give him my hand.'

However, the preparations for the intended nuptials still proceeded. Sir George beheld them with total indifference. He had used every endeavor to discover Rebecca; had traced her to her embarkation with Miss Abthorpe for America, and was told the vessel in which they went was lost and all on board perished.

‘Rebecca lost!’ he remembered his mother’s first wish to see lady Eleanor his wife. ‘She is an amiable woman,’ said he, ‘and though I cannot love again with the enthusiastic ardor I experienced for Rebecca, I will, if she voluntarily accepts my hand, exert myself to make her happy. She, like myself, has experienced disappointment in her tenderest hopes; we can at least console each other, and make up in friendship what we want in love.’

Oakly had taken leave of his friends at Windsor, and was on his way to Portsmouth. Sir George was in town with the lawyers, and the earl and lady Eleanor at breakfast in his library at Windsor, when a servant informed him that a clergyman requested to speak to them.—He was desired to walk up.

‘I am come, my lord,’ said he, seating himself with considerable embarrassment, ‘from a poor woman in this place, who, it is imagined, is at the point of death. From something she has imparted to me, I imagine it is absolutely necessary for your lordship to visit her, as she has a circumstance to relate which nearly concerns your family. She is likewise in distressed circumstances, and may, while she lives, which will not be long, require your benevolent assistance.’

The earl never wanted to be twice told of an object of compassion.

‘We will go directly,’ said he, and, ring-

ing the bell, ordered the carriage. Lady Eleanor and the clergyman accompanied him.

At a small cottage on the extremity of a forest, the carriage stopped, and the clergyman led the way into an inner apartment, where, on a bed, expressive of poverty in the extreme, lay a poor emaciated figure, in the last stage of a consumption.

‘Here is the earl and his daughter, Mrs Watts,’ said he.

‘They are very good,’ replied she, ‘to come and see such a wretch as I am. Oh! sir, oh! my lady, you will never forgive me; but I cannot die in peace till I have informed you that, through mine and my sister’s wickedness, you have nourished an impostor in your family, and that the real heir to the late sir George Worthy’s estate is either totally lost, or may be a poor wanderer, destitute of bread.’

The earl and Eleanor sat in mute astonishment, gazing at each other. The clergyman exhorted the penitent to proceed.

‘My eldest sister,’ said she, ‘was employed to wet-nurse her son, and was left at Twickenham with the child while her ladyship made a short tour to Flanders. During her lady’s absence my sister came to Windsor to me, bringing master with her. I at that time gave suck to a sweet little boy exactly of the same age, whose mother had died at my house but a month before. My sister

entreated me to take care of master Worthy for a day, while she went to town: I consented, and was proud of my charge. In the afternoon (he was asleep in the cradle) I left a little girl to rock him, and stepped about half a mile to buy something for supper against my sister came home. I made what haste I could, but on my return, what was my terror to see the cradle empty, and my girl at play in the street! However, I did not make any noise, or alarm the neighborhood; but inquiring of the girl who had been there, she said, only two gypsy women begging. It immediately occurred to me, that the gold bells and coral, together with the costly lace cap and jam the child had on, had been the incitement to this theft. When my sister returned, she was almost distracted—her character would be gone—she should never dare face her lady again! That evening we could think of nothing in order to avert the storm we should expect on my lady's return, till the diabolical thought presented itself of substituting my little nursling, whose features and complexion were nearly the same, in place of master Worthy, quieting our consciences with the idea that, as his mother was dead, and his father very poor, and talked of going abroad, it would be doing a deed of charity; and that, if we should ever find the lost infant, we might then acknowledge the fraud. Accordingly my sister returned to Twicken-

ham with the child, the plan succeeded beyond our expectations, for we feared the penetration of the servants, and I wrote to the father of the boy that his child was dead.'

'And who is it then,' cried the enraged earl, 'whom you have thus infamously palmed upon the family for the son of my sister, and who was, within a few days, to have been married to my daughter?'

'His father's name was George Littleton,' she replied faintly, 'and he was christened after him.'

'And have you never heard any thing of my poor cousin?' said Eleanor, tenderly.

'Never, madam; but should he ever be found, he has on his right arm, just below the shoulder, the mark of a mulberry.'

'Saddle my horses; send off all my servants,' said the earl, starting up; 'he shall not go to that d——d fighting place.'

'My dear father!' cried Eleanor.

'Rejoice, rejoice, my girl, for upon my soul the young dog had that mark on his arm when I found him sprawling under the oak.'

'And is he alive then?' said the poor woman. 'Thank God! then I shall die content.'

George Littleton, as we must now call him, however conscious of his innocence, felt greatly hurt at being so long the usurper of another's name and property, but the earl would not suffer him to dwell on the subject; and on his marriage with lady Eleanor, sir

George presented his quondam rival with the writings of an estate, worth five hundred pounds a year, given to him and his heirs forever; and so fond were they of his society, that it was but a small part of every year he spent from them.

The earl did not long survive his daughter's marriage, and sir George succeeded to the title of earl of Chatterton, the earl having begged the reversion of it for him sometime previous to his death.

Mr Littleton had given up all hopes of hearing of Rebecca. He imagined her dead; but her image was so deeply engraven on his heart, that he resolved never to enter into the married state. Sometimes he would think she might, perhaps, have been his sister, for he had never heard her father's christian name, but his heart recoiled from this suggestion. She was undoubtedly a relation, yet he had never heard her mention any uncle, but she might have many; he had never made many inquiries concerning her family.

One evening, when he was at a supper-party with lord Ossiter, that nobleman addressed him with, 'George, I saw an old acquaintance of yours last night. Ah, now I think of it, she may be a relation.'

'Who do you mean, my lord?'

'Who! why, who but that demure, primi-

tive piece of affected innocence, Miss Rebecca Littleton.'

'You must be mistaken, my lord; I have every reason to think she has been dead several years.'

'And I have a substantial reason to think she was alive last night, and in my arms.'

He then gave an account of the affair at lord Winterton's, little to the honor of our heroine.

'Poor girl,' said George, mentally, 'heavy must have been the trials that drove her to a life of infamy.'

From that time he frequented every place where he thought it likely to meet with her. 'I will snatch her from perdition,' said he. 'She shall share my little portion, eat of my bread, and drink of my cup. I will speak consolation to a mind that was once as pure as angels, and cannot, without infinite pain, be intimate with vice.'

About this time lord Ossiter's extravagance had so involved his estates, that it was necessary he should make a trip to the continent in order to retrieve them. George undertook to settle all his debts, and put the estates under proper regulations, and for this purpose took up his residence in Bedford-Square. He had been dining out, where the champaign flew briskly round, when he accidentally met our heroine just descended from the stage. The wine gave him a great

flow of spirits, which, added to the relation he had heard from lord Ossiter, accounts for the rude manner in which he accosted her.

The blow he received from the old sailor almost stunned him; however, he followed him into the house, and insisted on satisfaction for the insult, as he termed it. The old man swore it was a blow given in a right cause, and that he was ready to give him a dozen more if he were not already satisfied.

During this altercation the coachman entered with Rebecca's trunk, and asked where the young woman was to pay him his fare.

'She ran off,' said a man who saw the transaction.

'Well then,' says the coachman, 'I must keep the trunk for what she owes.' As he spoke he rested one end of it on a chair near a table on which stood a candle.

The old sailor looked at the directions, rubbed his eyes and looked again. 'By all that's good,' said he, 'it is my own girl, my Rebecca! Which way did she go? Let me follow her. Stand out of my way.'

'Not until you have paid me,' said the coachman, surlily.

The old man threw down five shillings, and told a waiter to take care of the trunk, ran out, followed by George; but, instead of turning into Pall-Mall, they went through the Palace into the Park, their search was therefore vain.

As they returned slowly together George asked the old man if he were any relation to Miss Littleton.

‘Yes,’ said he, ‘I am all the relation she has in the world, and a devilish poor one too, for I have not above half a guinea at this present time in my pocket. I have not been in London above two hours, nor in England above eight and forty.’

‘Is your name Littleton, sir?’

‘So my mother told me; I suppose she knew.’

‘Pardon me if I am troublesome; but had you ever a son?’

‘Yes; but he died an infant.’

‘You were informed he died at Windsor?’ The old man answered in the affirmative.

‘Ah! my dear sir,’ said George, ‘you were deceived; your son still lives; longs eagerly to embrace you, and divide with you the competence he enjoys.’

By this time they had returned to the public house. George called for a room, knelt before his father, and related to him all the reader is already acquainted with. What wonder if, in the delightful hurry of spirits this discovery occasioned, they did not think of the necessity of writing a note for Rebecca in case she came to inquire for her trunk; but, satisfied with leaving a verbal message, they repaired to Bedford-Square to enjoy an uninterrupted conversation.

The next morning Rebecca, so dear to both their hearts, recurred to their imaginations. George beheld her in want, plunged in infamy, the horrors of which her susceptible heart severely felt, and from which she could by no means extricate herself.

‘She may be in want,’ said his father, ‘but I’ll be d——d if she is infamous. I know the dear girl, George, and I’d stake my life upon her innocence. He then gave his son an account of the manner in which he found her in America, of the respect and esteem she created wherever she was known, and how much she was beloved by colonel Abthorpe’s family. But let us go to the house where the coach stopped,’ continued he, ‘she will most likely call there to get her trunk.’

They went out together, and entered the house just ten minutes after she had left it. Disappointed and grieved, unable by any means to trace which way she had gone, and fearing she would be distressed for the loss of her trunk, which might contain all her worldly possessions, they returned heavily home, and resolved to advertise it. This they immediately did in several papers, in such a manner as it was impossible for Rebecca not to know it was herself that was meant, though only the initials of the name were used; but Rebecca never saw the pa-

pers, and the repeated advertisements were fruitless.

George had introduced his father to lord and lady Chatterton; but though Rebecca had been once or twice mentioned before that lady, he had always avoided entering into explanations, and lady Chatterton did not know that she was the woman George had so long loved; for though, in the early part of their intimacy, he had frequently declared that his heart was engaged, he had never said to whom, or whether she was above or beneath him in rank; but simply said, he had no hope of being united to her.

On the day lady Chatterton had met her at the jeweller's, she mentioned the circumstance at dinner time. George and his father that day dined with them. 'I wanted to buy it of her,' said she, 'for one of the pictures was so like George Littleton, and the other was a lady whom I did not know, though I have seen the features before.'

'Good heavens !' said George, 'I am certain it could only be Rebecca herself.'

'I wish it may,' said the lady; 'but I did not think of it at the time; however, I have appointed her to come here tomorrow.'

'How did the poor girl look?' said old Mr Littleton.

'Very pale,' replied she, 'and, I fear, is in distress, from her agitation, and her visible reluctance to part with the pictures.'

‘Oh! my poor, lost Rebecca,’ said George, and rising hastily from the table, left the room to give vent to those emotions he could no longer suppress.

Rebecca, in distress, offering, with evident reluctance, the gold that enveloped his portrait for sale, convinced him he still retained a tender place in her remembrance. Once to have been beloved by her would have been his highest wish; now she was contaminated, lost to virtue! and though still inexpressibly dear to his heart, she could never be his wife. Yet she might be innocent;—lord Ossiter was not a man of the strictest veracity; he would have given worlds for an interview with her; and, unable to wait the issue of the morning, when she was expected in St Alban-Street, he obtained of lady Chatterton a direction to the jeweller, who, however, could give him no information.

Those only who have felt the pangs of suspense, can imagine the anxiety of Mr Littleton and George during the night. The next morning they repaired early to St Alban-Street, but the day passed and no Rebecca appeared. Another and another morning came, and still brought with them disappointment.

‘She will never come,’ said George; ‘the poor girl is conscious of her unhappy situation, and shame prevents her taking advan-

tage of lady Chatterton's offers of service.' Mr Littleton began to be of the same opinion; but the benevolent lady Chatterton never went out without leaving orders with her porter, that, should Rebecca call she might be desired to wait till her return. 'I will myself,' said she, 'have the pleasure of presenting her to her uncle. She shall not be hastily informed that he is in England, lest it should overpower her spirits; and, if I find her worthy, I will give her to her amiable cousin, and make her a fortune worth his acceptance.'

But unfortunately Miss Ossiter's joy, the effusions of which were mingled with incoherent intelligence concerning her uncle's marriage, prevented poor Rebecca's benefitting by her ladyship's kind intentions in her behalf.

George Littleton had accompanied lord and lady Chatterton in their morning ride. They returned together. Miss Ossiter came running to them as they entered the parlor.

'Oh! dear aunt, who do you think has been here; the greatest stranger! I do not think you know her; but I told her I was sure you would be glad to see her.'

'Why, who was it, my love?' said her ladyship, seating herself.

'Why, it was my own Rebecca Littleton! I knew her in a minute, though she is so pale and thin.'

‘And where is she?’ said George.

‘She could not wait any longer,’ replied the child; ‘but said she would call again tomorrow.’

‘Was ever any thing so unfortunate,’ said lady Chatterton.

George bit his lips, took hasty strides back and forward in the room, frequently struck his forehead with his hand, but spoke not.

In the afternoon the following letter was brought to lady Chatterton.

‘MADAM,

Agreeable to your ladyship’s benevolent desire, I this morning waited on you in St Alban-Street, an honor which the extreme illness of my mother had prevented my enjoying so early as I wished. While I was, in compliance with your commands, waiting your ladyship’s return from airing, I discovered that lord Chatterton and sir George Worthy are one and the same person; it, therefore, struck me that your ladyship having seen his portrait in my possession, might entertain but an indifferent opinion of my character. It might also occasion uneasiness between my lord and you, and interrupt that felicity which I fervently wish may be as lasting as your lives. I thought it my duty, therefore, to explain to your ladyship the means by which this portrait came into my possession.

‘I once, madam, lived in the family of the

late lady Mary Worthy, more as a highly favored companion than a servant. Indeed, she was to me a generous friend, a dear and respected benefactress, whom living I loved with the affection of a daughter, and whom dead I can never cease to lament.

‘Some months after her death I received her portrait as a present from sir George, by the hand of Mrs Harley, her ladyship’s housekeeper, but did not know it contained the resemblance of sir George, till some time after it had been in my possession; nor have I seen him since till about two months ago, when I accidentally met him in the street, and then we scarcely spoke to each other.

‘Permit me, madam, to return my thanks for the unexpected bounty you so delicately bestowed upon me; to thank you also for that benevolence of heart which led you so far to interest yourself in my behalf, as to wish again to see me; to have enjoyed your friendly protection would have been a cordial to my depressed soul; to deserve it, the study of my life. But, alas! madam, an insurmountable obstacle is placed between me and so enviable a distinction. Since I was so happy as to meet you, a circumstance has occurred which will prevent my again having the pleasure of waiting upon you; but permit me to offer up the most ardent petitions for the continued happiness of yourself and lord. May peace and love ever

dwell in your bosoms, and prosperity crown your days. Permit me also to add, that however inconsistent my conduct may appear, my heart will ever overflow with the most grateful affection towards your ladyship, while it beats in the breast of,

Your obliged humble servant,
 REBECCA LITTLETON?

‘I can’t comprehend all this,’ said lady Chatterton, putting the letter into George Littleton’s hand. He ran his eye hastily over the contents.

‘But I can,’ said he; ‘I conceive it all; the dear girl has never heard of the discovery of the real sir George Worthy. She imagines me to be your husband, and the generosity of her soul will not suffer her to throw herself in the way of a man who once professed to love her, and whom, from the whole tenor of her conduct, I have reason to think she loves.’

‘I would lay my life she is a good girl,’ said lady Chatterton; ‘indeed, her countenance appeared the index of a mind replete with innocence and purity. I will instantly order the carriage and go to her; nor will I return without her.’

‘Dear, generous lady Chatterton,’ said George, ringing the bell.

‘Where is the person who brought this letter?’ said the lady.

‘It was brought by a porter, madam, and he did not stop a moment.’

The joy that had for a moment animated the features of George, instantly vanished. He again caught up the letter, but there was no address annexed to it.

After every probable method had been taken by Mr Littleton, George, and lady Chatterton to discover our heroine’s retreat, all proving equally ineffectual, they were obliged to rest satisfied that no exertion of theirs had been wanting, and trust to chance for a discovery, which their united endeavors had not been able to make. Old Mr Littleton began to be tired of living on shore, and applied for employment; but as he annexed to the request the condition of being promoted in the service, he found but little attention was paid to it, and he only obtained promises, that when opportunity offered he should be remembered. He spent great part of his time with the Chatterton family, and as the summer approached it was proposed, that both himself and George should accompany them to their country seat.

Lady Chatterton’s birth day was on the 7th of June, and she made a point of always celebrating it before she left town, her husband regularly presenting her with five hundred pounds to be expended on the occasion. Mr Clayton, his lordship’s chaplain, being caterer extraordinary, always provided the

entertainment, in which her ladyship was so very selfish, as to allow no one to partake but her husband, this identical chaplain and herself.

Mr Clayton was always extremely busy for some weeks previous to the day; the whole cities of London, Westminster, and their environs, being ransacked for delicacies to suit her ladyship's taste; for on this day she was a real voluptuary, though all the rest of her life was marked by temperance and moderation. But to speak without a metaphor, lady Chatterton was a woman of so unfashionable a turn, that, rather than raise the envy of half the town by giving a splendid ball, she chose to expend the money her husband gave her in relieving indigence, and raising depressed merit.

'There shall be some cause for rejoicing on my birth-day,' said she, 'for I will cheer the afflicted spirit, and fulfil the duties incumbent on my station: we were created to be of service to each other, and we have no reason to rejoice in our creation, but as we fulfil the design of our Creator.'

Mr Clayton, therefore, carefully searched for objects proper to excite her ladyship's compassion, and share her benevolence.—The happy season now drew near, and Mr Clayton took his usual walks round the metropolis, while, with a laudable curiosity, he made little errands into chandlers' shops,

green stalls, and public houses, in order to learn the circumstances of the people in every poor neighborhood through which he passed. It happened as he was purchasing some barley-sugar at a shop of the former description, he saw two suspicious looking men ascend the stairs, and immediately after heard a bustle in the apartment over the shop. Presently the men came down, accompanied by a genteel looking man in deep mourning. He had the air and manner of a gentleman; but his uncombed hair, and pale, unshaven face, bespoke a mind ill at ease.

‘Well, they have nabbed him at last,’ said the mistress of the shop, as the young man and his ungenteel companions left the house together. ‘Would you believe it, sir, that young man, not six months ago, was one of the gayest bucks about town. I remember him flashing away like a lord, and I was told he visited lords and gentlefolks of great fortune. Indeed, they did say, there was a lady of quality in love with him; but that was not much to his credit or advantage, for she was a married woman, and once he nearly lost his life by her husband.’

‘But if he were so gay,’ said Clayton, ‘how came he to be so reduced as he now appears?’

‘Why, sir, you must know I can give good information, for I once lived servant in the family, though now, thank God, I can hold

up my head without service, or without being beholden to any body, and that is more than every one can say.'

'Well; but about the young gentleman,' said Clayton, rather impatiently.

'Yes, as I was saying, he was a gay spark, and Miss, his sister, a very fine lady. His father was a merchant, kept a large house in the city, and lived away at a very high rate; coach, servants, every thing like a lord. Well, behold you, he died about six months' ago, and left not a farthing behind him; so away went coach, fine house, furniture, plate and all, to pay his debts, and madam, Miss, and her brother forced to humble themselves, so they came to lodge with me. The young man got a trifling place in some office, and that is all they have to live on, which, I believe in my conscience, is little enough, for they run some long bills with me. Why, sir, they owes me above three guineas now; but, seeing as how other people are taking measures to get their own, I shall make bold to ask for mine. Charity begins at home, is an old proverb, and a very good one. Don't you think so, sir? If Mr Savage can't pay his tailor, mayhap, when the bill gets a little higher he may not be able to pay me.'

'True,' said Clayton, coldly; 'but pray could you bring me to a sight of Mrs Savage or her daughter?'

‘Lord, not I; they are so proud, that if a body offers to speak or introduce a friend, they are upon stilts directly.’

‘Well, but pray step up with a civil message from me; say I wish to speak with them on particular business.’

‘And who must I tell them you are, sir?’

‘My name is of no consequence; only say a clergyman.’

The woman executed the commission, and, soon returning, he was desired to walk up.

On entering a small ill-furnished apartment, he beheld two charmingly prepossessing women, the eldest did not appear to be more than forty years old, and the youngest seventeen; they were dressed in mourning, plain, but very becoming, and had much the air of women of fashion.

He apologized for the seeming rudeness of a stranger intruding himself into their apartments uninvited, said that he had seen the transaction of the arrest, and thought it might be in his power to alleviate, if not entirely remove, their distresses.

The mother’s eyes overflowed at the mention of her son’s imprisonment. Her daughter took her hand, pressed it to her lips, and gave her a consolatory look; but the startling drops of sympathy that trembled in her eyes forbade her utterance.

‘Lady Chatterton will dry those tears,’ said Clayton, mentally, ‘or I am deceived

in her character. What a pity so much sweetness should droop under the heavy hand of affliction!

Clayton was a young man—Miss Savage a charming woman.

He drew from them, in the most delicate manner, an account of their various embarrassments in pecuniary matters, said he had known the late Mr Savage, and once received a great obligation at his hands, which he was happy in having now the power to return, requested they would consider him as their banker; ‘for, my dear Miss,’ said he to the daughter, ‘I owed your father a considerable sum of money.’ He then presented them with the whole contents of his purse, as he said, in part payment, and departed, promising to see them again soon.

His assertions, in regard to having known Mr Savage, were not strictly true; but it was a pious fraud, which he reconciled by reflecting that every Christian owed a debt of charity to the distressed and afflicted, by which he prevailed on the distressed ladies to accept pecuniary aid, and he humbly trusted, the design would sanctify the act.

Two days from this was lady Chatterton’s birth-day.—‘Come, Clayton,’ said she, when she had read the memorandums over of that day’s *route*, ‘we will pay the first visit to your pretty Savage.’

Clayton introduced her to the ladies as a

person courting their friendship and desirous of serving them. From them she learned that young Savage, when arrested, having not the least hope of liberation, had insisted on being immediately conveyed to prison.

‘Then we will go and find a key to open those tremendous doors,’ said lady Chatterton, ‘and I think,’ (glancing her eye over her memorandums) ‘I have some other business to transact there. My dear ladies I will soon send this beloved son and brother to you, on condition you all dine with me to day at five o’clock.’ - She presented her card and departed, leaving the ladies oppressed by sensations which could only be expressed by tears.

Lady Chatterton proceeded to the prison, and was introduced to young Savage, whom she immediately congratulated on his liberty. ‘Your disagreeable business is all settled, sir,’ said she, ‘and I beg you will hasten home to your expecting mother and sister.’ Savage gazed at lady Chatterton with astonishment; for, habited as she was, in a plain robe of white muslin, a bonnet, and a cloak of the same materials, and led by the hand of the meek, benevolent-looking Clayton, he knew not whether to consider her as an inhabitant of this globe or a celestial spirit.

‘If what you say, madam,’ cried he, ‘be really true, and I have no reason to doubt

it, for your countenance is benevolence itself. Pardon my seeming ingratitude, but I could have wished the affair had not been so hastily concluded.'

'Strange, indeed!' said her ladyship;—
'Do you not want liberty?'

'Most ardently, madam; but there is in this habitation of misery, an object more deserving your charitable notice, an object so pitiable, so very interesting to the feelings of humanity, that I could, with satisfaction, have seen the liberality extended in my behalf, transferred to her.'

'Thank heaven,' said her ladyship, 'neither the means of comforting the afflicted, nor the will to use those means are denied me; neither my heart or purse are limited. Come, sir, lead on to the place where I may dry the tear of sorrow, and gladden the prisoner's ear by the welcome sound of liberty.'

Savage led the way to a miserable room, in which, on a truss of straw, for neither bed or chair appeared in the apartment, laid an elderly woman almost worn to a skeleton, whose haggard looks and labored breathing, seemed to portend approaching dissolution. On the same straw, supporting the aged invalid's head in her lap, sat the almost shadowy figure of a young creature, habited in a white bed-gown, her hair hanging negligently over her face and shoulders, one hand held the burning forehead of the apparently

dying woman, the other hung motionless by her side. Beside them stood a pitcher of water, and a small brown loaf.

‘Heaven preserve us,’ said lady Chatterton, gasping for breath, ‘what a scene is here!’ The old woman raised her languid eyes at the sound of the voice, but the young woman remained in the same posture, nor seemed to heed that any one approached.

Lady Chatterton now drew near, took her hand, and, in a voice soft as the music of the spheres, bid her be comforted. ‘Come, cheer up, my poor girl,’ said she, ‘I will do all I can to serve you.’

She turned her head, looked earnestly at lady Chatterton, a faint glow rushed over her pale features, and as quickly disappeared as she exclaimed, ‘Oh! I know you; you are an angel of benevolence,’ and fainted.

She was immediately conveyed to the air, and, on cutting the lace of her stays, lady Chatterton saw a small shagreen case, hung pendant from her neck by a riband. A sudden irresistible impulse led her to open it, when the portraits of George Littleton and lady Mary struck her sight. She looked again on the young woman, who was now just recovering, and instantly, in her reanimated countenance, recognised the features of Rebecca.

The debt, for which her mother had been thrown into prison, was fifteen pounds, which

was contracted with the apothecary during her and Rebecca's illness. Lady Chatterton soon contrived to have it discharged, and poor Mrs Serle, being tenderly informed of her liberation, was carefully placed in a carriage, her daughter on one side, and her deliverer on the other, who supported her as the coach moved slowly towards St Alban Street; nor ever did conqueror, in his triumphal car, feel more exulting sensations than did her ladyship when she led the grateful, trembling Rebecca into her own house, saw her mother laid in a comfortable bed, and heard from a physician, that tender attention and peace of mind would be more efficacious towards her restoration than medicine. He also ordered Rebecca to be immediately put to bed, and take some wine and water, with a few drops of laudanum in it, as the agitation of her spirits and sudden change of fortune had occasioned a wildness in her looks, and an incoherence in her discourse, that rather alarmed him. Lady Chatterton saw the prescription administered, and then descended to meet the guests in the dining-parlor, while the exhausted Rebecca sunk into a more peaceful slumber than she had enjoyed for many months.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE party assembled in the dining-parlor, lord and lady Chatterton, the Savages, Mr Clayton, George Littleton and his father.

It was a tender, difficult task to inform these affectionate relations that Rebecca was found, yet it was a task her ladyship's generous heart burned to execute. Gently, and by degrees, she made the interesting discovery; but when George knew his Rebecca was really in the house, it was impossible to prevent his flying to the apartment that contained her; Mr Littleton followed. They entered the chamber with cautious step—George softly drew aside the curtain. She was in a profound sleep. He stood gazing with a look of joy, mingled with tender pity, on her altered countenance. Mr Littleton sunk on a chair by the bed-side. 'Oh! my poor suffering girl,' said he, 'how art thou changed!' His head fell on the pillow beside her, and tears rushed down his venerable countenance.

Rebecca moved, the nurse forced George from her bed-side. She opened her eyes; the power of recollection seemed, for a time, suspended. She looked wildly round her.

'Where is my mother?' said she, 'I will not be taken from her. If she must die in

prison, I will die with her.' She raised herself in bed, and saw her uncle.

'Rebecca,' said he, in an accent of tenderness, 'have you forgotten me, my dear?'

'Oh! no, my beloved uncle,' said she, her head dropping on his shoulder. 'Oh, no! How long have you been in England?' Then pausing a moment, 'But what have they done with my mother?'

'She is safe my love; endeavor to recollect yourself. Do you not know she came with you to this house? She is in bed in the next room.'

Rebecca put her hand to her forehead. 'I am striving to think,' said she, 'but I cannot remember where I am, or how I came here.'

By degrees the power of recollection returned, and every circumstance recurred to her memory. 'I am in the house of lord Chatterton,' said she, 'I could have preferred any other.'

'But suppose, my dear girl, lord Chatterton should not be the person you think him? Suppose he should be a man whom you have never seen.'

She listened in silence, and her uncle, in the most cautious manner, informed her of his having found a son, and that son was the man she imagined married lady Eleanor Harcourt.

The relation was wonderful. Rebecca

could scarcely credit it, yet, if it were really true, if she were still beloved by the man whose image was engraven on her heart, and, indeed, released from the vow she had so solemnly given her deceased benefactress. The rapidity with which these thoughts rushed through her brain, and the violent emotions of her heart, almost overpowered her weak frame. She breathed with difficulty, her eyes grew dim, the attendant perceived the change, and giving her a few drops in some water recalled her fleeting spirits.

‘And where is this new cousin of mine?’ said she, with a faint smile, when she was somewhat recovered, ‘methinks I should like to see him.’

George’s heart palpitated violently. He drew near the bed-side of his beloved, dropped on one knee and cried, ‘Oh! my Rebecca, behold me here!’

A smile of ineffable pleasure beamed over the countenance of Rebecca while she extended her hand towards her lover. He took it and pressed it to his lips. The ensuing scene can be easily imagined by the feeling heart, and to those devoid of sensibility, the description would be insipid; we will, therefore, pass it over in silence.

Peace being now restored to the bosom of our heroine, her health, her vivacity and bloom, rapidly returned. Her mother too,

recovered a sufficient degree of health to enable her to participate in her daughter's happiness.

An early day was named for the union of George and Rebecca, previous to which lord Chatterton procured the old lieutenant to be superannuated, and a handsome pension was given him in return for his long and faithful services; a lucrative post was also procured for George Littleton, but he requested leave to transfer it to young Savage.

'I must beseech your lordship to pardon me,' said George, 'but that young gentleman has no means, whatever, of supporting his truly amiable mother and sister. For my own part, though in the early part of life accustomed to all the indulgencies which the possession of an affluent fortune could bring, I have long been convinced, that abundance of riches cannot secure happiness. Possessed of my beloved Rebecca, whose humble spirit will enjoy most felicity in the quiet, undisturbed walks of life, beholding my father possessed of sufficient to make his setting sun serene and unclouded, what should I desire more? We will retire into Berkshire to the estate which you have so generously settled on my family, and if we can once a year boast of the honor of a visit from you and your ac-

complished lady, I shall certainly be the happiest mortal breathing.'

His lordship was exceedingly gratified with George's frankness; and accordingly the place was given to young Savage, who was equally capable of discharging all the duties incumbent upon him with honor and integrity.

Lady Chatterton had, with her lord's unreserved approbation, ordered a settlement to be made on Rebecca of two thousand pounds, which sum his lordship supplied and placed in the funds for her own particular use.

The day after the union took place, Rebecca, George, Mr Littleton, and Mrs Serle took a most affectionate leave of their generous and warm-hearted friends in St Alban Street, and departed for Berkshire.—The situation was beautiful almost beyond description, and the neat cottage-like appearance of the house, together with the beautiful simplicity of the furniture, afforded Rebecca the most pleasurable sensations. No very considerable length of time elapsed before she was visited by the neighboring gentry, among whom, what was her surprise to see lady Winterton, whose sable habiliments denoted that she was at last emancipated from that worst of all slavery, wedlock, with the man, for whom she could have no love.

She informed our heroine, that her health was so impaired by vexation, and the effects of the wound she had received, that her life was thought to have been in imminent danger. Change of air was prescribed by her physicians, and her lord had her removed to a small estate which he possessed in Berkshire; also, that she had derived considerable benefit from the change, but from the time of their leaving town her lord's health had declined; he had been subject to an asthmatic complaint, which latterly increased upon him, and had terminated his life about two months before Rebecca's arrival in the country.

Lady Winterton was certainly possessed of too much delicacy in her present circumstances to mention the name of Savage. It is true she had been imprudent, but never criminal. Sickness had moderated the extreme vivacity of her disposition, and led her to reflect. She could not avoid wishing to hear of him, or learn the reason why, from the fatal evening when they met at Cheswick, he had never attempted to write to or see her. She was entirely ignorant of his fate from that time, yet she kept those wishes concealed.

Lord and Lady Ossiter continued on the continent, where, immersed in vice and dissipation, his lordship fell a victim to intemperance, and her ladyship became notori-

ous for her gallantry; forgetful of the sacred name of mother, she gave the reins to folly, and publicly defied the laws of virtue and religion.

Though Rebecca, from the variegated scenes through which she had passed, had purchased a most complete knowledge of the world, yet it had not hardened her heart or rendered her callous to the calls of misery; her prudence in her family concerns enabled her ever to have a morsel for the hungry, and a garment to throw over the destitute orphan. When the poor saw her, they blessed her—infant lips set forth her praises—aged knees bent for her before the Throne of Grace. She cheered the declining years of her mother and uncle—they called down blessings on her head.

Her husband adored her; the smile of content dimpled on her cheek, and her dwelling was the mansion of peace.

THE END.









REBECCA;

OR

THE FILLE DE CHAMBRE.
